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THE CHRISTIAN STUDENT :

DESIGNED

TO ASSIST CHRISTIANS IN GENERAL
IN ACQUIRING RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE.

WITH A FULL LIST OF BOOKS ON RELIGION.

BY THE REV. EDWARD BICKERSTETH,
RECTOR OF WATTON, HERTS.

FIFTH EDITION, CORRECTED.



FLEET STREET AND HANOVER STREET,
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CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. THE USEFULNESS OF THEOLOGICAL STUDY TO CHRISTIANS	1
II. THE INFLUENCE OF PRACTICAL HOLINESS ON THEOLOGICAL STUDIES	18
III. THE DIVINE TEACHING WHICH GOD HAS PRO- MISED	33
IV. THE STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES	46
V. THE CHARACTER OF SCRIPTURAL DIVINITY	63
VI. THE STUDY OF PRACTICAL WORKS	86
VII. THE STUDY OF CONTROVERSIAL WORKS	92
VIII. THE DANGERS CONNECTED WITH SUCH STUDIES	134
IX. PRACTICAL RULES FOR STUDY	150
X. ADVICE TO A STUDENT ON ENTERING THE UNIVERSITY	166
XI. OUTLINES OF THE HISTORY OF DIVINITY	177
§ i. THE FATHERS	178
ii. THE SCHOOLMEN AND THEIR CONTEM- PORARIES	188
iii. THE REFORMERS	192
iv. SUCCESSORS OF THE REFORMERS	208
v. THE NON-CONFORMISTS	225
vi. THE DIVINES OF THE RESTORATION	244
vii. MODERN WRITERS	278

PREFACE.

THE study of religion is the duty of every human being. The extent to which that study can or ought to be pursued will much vary with the different circumstances of men. But we have all infinite need to become wise unto salvation : overwhelmed in one common disaster, on us all is laid the indispensable obligation of ascertaining the means of escape, for ourselves as well as for others. If we were not creatures, if we had not to please God our Creator, if we had not all offended him, if we had not to die, if we had not to pass through the great judgment, if eternity—an eternity of woe or bliss—were not before us, we might with less danger neglect religion ; but as these are no fabled tales, but solemn realities, it is of incalculable moment that every human being should know how to please God, how so to pass through the valley of the shadow of death as to fear no evil, and how so to be accepted in the day of judgment, as to enter into the joy of the Lord. To know this is our grand concern, the true work of the Christian Student.

Through the progress of education our country possesses, much more than it ever did before, a reading population ; and it is specially important in a day like this, when

principles are tried to the uttermost, that so extensive a capacity for improvement should have a right direction. But it is to be feared that there is far too general a neglect of instruction, in the principles of Christianity and of our Reformed Religion. Many Christians at present seem little able to meet the various subtle and active adversaries of their faith. To do this effectively they must have mature knowledge and vital godliness ; but had they only a knowledge of the theory of religion, it would preserve them from the public exposure arising from ignorance, and from rash steps, for which a man suffers through a whole subsequent life.

Amid all the agitations and discouraging circumstances of the times in which we live, the Author views with the sincerest pleasure the progress of theological knowledge, and the increasing number of pious students preparing at our universities for holy orders ; the ardour and zeal with which important studies are now prosecuted ; and the various public measures by which they have been promoted.

Knowing how much such a work is needed, and persuaded that he should be doing an acceptable service to many who have desired such aid, he has given a lengthened list of books. It is by no means his intention to furnish a catalogue for an academy or a college. A bare list would occupy a large volume, as may be seen in lists already published of large libraries. A select list of books has therefore been his aim. But selection implies preference, and calls for the exercise of judgment and discretion ; and here all who have considered the subject will see the extreme difficulty of forming a competent and unexceptionable opinion. A sound judgment in all cases calls for an extent of reading and reflection to which the author

can make no pretence. In all extended lists some books must be inserted from a judgment and recollection formed at a considerable distance of time, and with less maturity of judgment.

Mr. Horne's valuable Catalogue of Queen's College Library at Cambridge, furnished him with the divisions, and suggested the names of many of the books under those divisions, in the chapter entitled the Minister's Library.

If some think that he has greatly exceeded in the number of books mentioned ; he would say the excess furnishes the larger scope for the Student's choice. If others think that he has fallen short, he would advert to the impossibility of including all good books. If any find peculiarly valuable and favourite authors omitted, he is obliged to mention either inadvertence or ignorance as the only excuses which he can offer.

The Author desires thankfully and joyfully to acknowledge what is good in other communions that differ from his own. Unhappily divided as is the present state of the Church of Christ, it will yet be generally admitted, that no particular body of Christians has the main truths *exclusively*. Much even as he fears and dislikes the *system* of the Romanist, against which he would ever protest, there are admirable writers in the Roman Church as well as among Protestants. And in the different denominations of Protestants, there are holy and excellent authors among Churchmen and Dissenters, among Presbyterians and Independents, among Baptists and Quakers, among Wesleyans and Moravians, among Lutherans and Reformed. Let none be rejected that have the spirit of the Bible, because the writers differ in external communion. His object has been to mention the best works with which he

was acquainted. He has inserted, with equal pleasure, Owen and Bishop Hall, Doddridge and Bishop Beveridge, Watts and Bishop Hopkins. As the immortal spirits of these holy men, notwithstanding minor differences, are now doubtless together in heaven, so their works, a kind of visible image of their spirits, may well stand in peace and harmony in the same lists, communicating in their respective proportions light and joy to the Christian Student.

The chapter entitled, 'Advice to a Student on entering the University,' was, at the Author's request, prepared for this work by the kindness of his beloved brother, the Rev. John Bickersteth.

In the outline of the History of Divinity, the Author has felt utterly incompetent to present more than an outline, in which he is sensible that there must be many deficiencies. He has considered it best, with all openness, but he trusts in the spirit of love, freely to mention what he feels to be objectionable in any author. It may encourage such a candid statement of objections to look forward to the period, when, if they are really well-founded, the authors of the objectionable sentiments will be the very first to thank one who may have helped to neutralize any thing of an injurious tendency. But he could often speak only in general terms. A complete history of theological literature by one competent to give it from mature knowledge, both of the scriptures and of human authors, would indeed be a valuable accession to the cause of truth.

When we consider the extensive range of theology, it is morally impossible that any one can have both personally and fully studied all its various branches. On subjects which he felt peculiarly delicate or difficult, or with which he felt less acquainted, he has given the sentiments

of the best authors that he knew as likely to give a scriptural judgment. But feeling how defective all human judgment must be, he cannot but be conscious that he has often probably failed both in his discrimination and decision. The great day is at hand and will soon disclose all. But in the mean time, if he can in some feeble measure subserve the progress of divine knowledge, and of that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, he will not have laboured in vain.

In the Treatise throughout, the Author desires to keep far from assuming the office of a master, and to send it forth with the feeling that he is a scholar, and not a master ; a scholar in that school, where there is but one master, even Christ, and where all his disciples are brethren.

May that gracious Saviour in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, be more and more revealed by his Spirit, and through his word to every Christian Student, till the time arrive *when all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest.*

Islington, April 22, 1829.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

IN the present edition several retrenchments have been made in different parts of the work, to enable the author to enlarge the Lists of Books in the Minister's Library, and bring them and other parts of the work down to the present time. Social prayers for Students have been added. By these alterations the cost of the work to Students have been reduced, while it is hoped that the general usefulness of it has been increased.

Every thing in the last few years has shown us that a deeper tone of divine truth in all who profess to hold that truth, is needed to meet the growing corruptions of religion, and the infidelity and lawlessness which casts off all religion. God's own light as given us in his word, must be more and more our guide through the darkness and conflicts of these days. We are assured also, that when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. We may expect, therefore, fresh truth to shine out from the sacred Volume. The word of prophecy in general, and especially the hope of the Lord's coming, is as a light shining in a dark place.

May we all then, give ourselves heartily, and constantly, and prayerfully, to the full study of every part of the word

of God. May we thus, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left, meet all our foes, and by manifestation of the truth, commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

The author feels grateful for the reception which his book has already met. Should any gain spiritual advantage by his writings, may they wholly attribute it to that gracious Being from whom all good flows, and give Him all the glory: The author only asks their affectionate prayers, that he may himself discern the whole of God's revealed truth, fulfil what he endeavours to teach others, and be used as an instrument of good, so that our common God and Saviour may be more extensively glorified.

Watton Rectory, Herts,

March 1, 1844.



THE CHRISTIAN STUDENT.

CHAPTER I.

THE USEFULNESS OF THEOLOGICAL STUDY TO CHRISTIANS.

THE Christian is placed by his heavenly Father in this world, as in a school to prepare him for his future and everlasting life. Every thing which he sees around him, and which he passes through,—all the works of creation, and all the wonders of providence,—daily bring before him lessons in that pure and heavenly wisdom which he has to acquire, to make him meet for that inheritance, which fadeth not away.

The Christian Student is one who is constantly receiving instruction, and gaining knowledge to fit him for serving God on earth, and for the higher and more blessed service in which he hopes to spend a happy eternity.

The design of this work chiefly is, to set before him the best method of pursuing theological studies: that is, the study of human writings on religion, in connexion with a supreme regard to the word of God, in order that he may become *instructed unto the kingdom of heaven*. The wish of the author is so to assist him that he may, if a private Christian, be enabled *always to give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in him, with*

meekness and fear ; and, if purposing to fulfil the more arduous office of a Christian Minister, he may be directed to those studies which may better fit him for being a work-man that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

A Christian divine, in the true sense of the words, is the highest and most blessed character on earth. Witsius happily describes it :—‘ By a Divine I understand one who, imbued with the solid knowledge of God and divine things, God Himself being the Teacher, not by words only but by the whole course of his life, sets forth and celebrates the admirable virtues of God, and so is wholly devoted to His glory. Such were in former days the holy patriarchs, such the divinely-inspired prophets, such the apostolic teachers of the whole world, such some of those whom we call Fathers, widely-shining lights of the primitive Church.’ *

To attain this character, study is, among other things, indispensably requisite. When divine revelation was first committed to writing, it became a duty, a privilege, and a blessing, to read that writing. Respecting this duty there will, among Christians, be little difference of opinion.

The advantages of a written statement of opinions being perceived, books multiplied, even before the coming of Christ, to a vast extent. Hence in the days of Solomon, it was asserted, *of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.* The Alexandrine library, burnt about fifty years before Christ, is said to have contained 400,000 manuscript volumes. The invention of printing immensely increased the number of copies of books, and the facilities of access to them.

There are doubtless evils inseparable from these advantages. Where books have an improper or evil tendency, the harm done becomes far more extensive ; and the very multitude of books adds to the difficulty of choice and selection, and disposes the supine and indolent to sit down

* See his Oration on the True Theologian, in the 2nd vol. of his *Miscellanea Sacra*, 553.

in contented ignorance. Pride and vanity are also fostered by mere literary acquisitions ; and the possession of religious knowledge may be fatally but easily mistaken for the possession of real religion.

It is perfectly true, that not merely human learning, but scriptural knowledge in its highest degree (*prophecy* and understanding *all mysteries* and *all knowledge*,) may be vain and unprofitable. A church may be *enriched with all knowledge, and come behind in no gift*,—and yet be *carnal and walk according to man*. 1 Cor. iii. 3.

There are also sorrows in knowledge from which the ignorant are free : we discover many evils which we could not before discern : we perceive an unexpected darkness where we thought all was light ; we sometimes ourselves mistake error for truth ; and doubts are excited where none existed before.

But still, whatever sorrows attend wisdom, it *excelleth folly as far as light excelleth darkness* ; much of this sorrow is real gain in the result ; to be exempt from it through ignorance is no real advantage. It is better to know that evil which we may correct, than to slumber on in ignorance till all be lost. After making every abatement, real religion has all along been vastly advanced by means of learning.

It is of *written books* that David gives those high commendations :—*The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart ; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes ; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb.* It is of *written books* that our Saviour says, *Search the scriptures, for in them ye think that ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.* And the Apostle declares that they are able to make us wise unto salvation, *through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

These things are spoken of inspired books. But we have no reason to think that the Apostle, when he told Timothy to *give attendance to reading*, wished him to confine

his attention to the records of inspiration only, especially since he himself quoted heathen writers (as Aratus, a Greek poet, Acts xvii. 28 ; and Epimenides, a Cretan, Titus i. 12.) in order to illustrate the truths which he wished to impress.

THE SCRIPTURES SPEAK MUCH IN FAVOUR OF KNOWLEDGE IN GENERAL. Thus it is said, *That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good*, Prov. xix. 2. *The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge*. Prov. xviii. 15. *Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge*. Prov. xxii. 17. *The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge*. Prov. xv. 14. *The excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it*. Eccles. vii. 12. These passages apply, in the highest sense, to scriptural and divine knowledge, but comprehend also knowledge in general, and especially whatever facilitates the acquisition of that which is divine and scriptural.

The Holy Scriptures state in strong terms the danger of wanting knowledge, both as it respects ministers and people. *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge : because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me*. Hosea iv. 6. Isaiah speaks in a similar way of the evil of having no knowledge, Isaiah v. 13.

The Apostle Paul in the first epistle to the Corinthians, has placed this subject in a clear light. He commences the twelfth chapter with stating that he *would not have them ignorant, concerning spiritual gifts*. He then shows the nature of those gifts, some of which were miraculous and peculiar to that age, and others needful in all ages. He tells them to *covet earnestly the best gifts* ; and in the thirteenth chapter, shows the superior excellence of charity, but not to the disparagement of other gifts ; for in the fourteenth, he charges them to *desire spiritual gifts* ; and in verse twelve bids them *seek to excel to the edifying of the church*. Great then as is the value, and supreme as is the

importance of the graces of the Christian, they must not exclude a holy diligence to acquire those gifts of *the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues*, which are profitable to our own edification, and to the edification of the church.

GOD HAS MANIFESTLY OWNED AND PROSPERED HUMAN WRITINGS ON RELIGION. It is fully admitted that there are many devout, holy, heavenly-minded Christians who are thoroughly versed in the Scriptures, but have little or none of what is reckoned human learning : real piety may consist with considerable deficiencies in learning. And again, a man may have an extensive knowledge of languages, he may know the whole theory of religion, and be able to defend it most ably and skilfully against its most subtle opponents ; he may have the intellectual powers and stores of a Warburton or a Horsley, and yet not have that experience of the truth in its sanctifying influence on his own heart, which manifests itself in meekness, humility, forbearance, brotherly-kindness, devotion, and the whole spirit of the Christian. Dr. Buchanan justly observes, that ‘ we must not confound two terms, a Theologian and a Christian. That which constitutes a Christian is *faith, hope, and charity, these three*. Much human learning is not essentially necessary to constitute a Christian. Indeed a man may be a profound Theologian, and not be a Christian at all. He may be learned in the doctrines and history of Christianity, and yet be a stranger to the fruits of Christianity : he may be destitute of faith, of hope, and charity.’

Yet we must not from the abuse of a thing despise it altogether. If we look at the general state of the church, how few eminent Christians there are who have not been greatly indebted to religious books, either for their first impressions, or for much of that knowledge by which they have acquired enlarged and correct views of divine truth, and pursued a wise and holy conduct : how few have been extensively useful to others who have not themselves been benefitted by study ! Many of those Christians, who are

now nourished by the Scriptures only, received their first religious impressions through human books. Hardly any Christians are there who have not in one way or other received much advantage from them. It has, unquestionably, pleased God to carry on His own kingdom, and promote the spiritual welfare of his people by means of human writings. Undoubtedly, in those of his servants, there has been the manifestation of the Spirit given to every man to profit withal. Nor need we suppose that so many holy and wise individuals, who have communicated their thoughts to the world, after long, and deep, and devotional study of the sacred writings, have thus laboured in vain. A person who has travelled, with an observing mind, over every part of a country, has acquired thereby, in all ordinary cases, experience to guide others. The fruit of such toil will only be despised by those who are ignorant of its real value. The Holy Spirit has manifestly, in different degrees, and in varied gifts, helped the servants of God, so that we have a vast accumulation of valuable knowledge in their compositions, and God is continually using them for good.

Again, LEARNING IS NEEDFUL FOR THE DUE UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE. If reading the sacred volume be important, we must of necessity admit the usefulness of a variety of other studies. The Bible itself could not have been presented to any nation now existing, in its vernacular language, without the aid of considerable human learning. The Bible is, in its first parts, the most ancient of all books ; it was delivered in languages that are now dead, in a foreign land, and abounding with allusions to ancient manners and customs. Though the knowledge of these things may be of little comparative importance to a poor man only anxious to know its saving truths for his own eternal welfare, it is of great moment to those who have to preach, and explain, and defend the sacred contents of this blessed volume. Hence it becomes important to acquaint ourselves with the Hebrew and Greek languages, the early versions of the scriptures, the manners and antiquities of

the Jews, and other things of a like kind, in order that we may know what is the full import and meaning of the original record of the divine will.

The Bible also contains predictions relating to all nations that have had any connexion with the Church of God, and ultimately affecting mankind at large. We shall lose one of the most striking and satisfactory evidences for the authority and truth of the Bible, as the word of God, if we disregard the history of nations, which is in fact the developement of the prophecies of that book.

DULY AND FULLY TO COMPREHEND CHRISTIANITY, CALLS FOR THE HIGHEST AND MOST CULTIVATED POWERS OF THE HUMAN MIND : and, in this view, vast is the importance of education, and habits of study and reflection, to a right reception of religious truth. ‘Consider,’ says Mr. Foster, ‘what a fatal inaptitude for receiving the truths of religion is created by the neglect of training minds to the exercise of their faculties, and the acquirement of elementary information.’ After then showing what are the sublime, and holy, and spiritual doctrines of Christianity, he states the difficulty of ‘beings who never learned to think at all, who have hardly ever once in their whole lives made a real effort to direct and concentrate the actions of their faculties on any thing abstracted from the objects palpable to the senses,’ learning religion.

Learning is also NEEDFUL FOR KNOWING THE WORKS OF GOD. The volume of nature is as much of divine workmanship as that of grace, and displays the same divine wisdom, power, and love. But an extensive knowledge of what God has created for His glory and for our instruction, can in general only be attained by human writings. Bishop Reynolds remarks, ‘All secular learning is the knowledge of God’s works : philosophical and mathematical learning, the knowledge of his works of creation ; historical and political learning, the knowledge of his works of providence : moral, and œconomical, and civil learning, the knowledge of those remainders of his image and law which are left in the minds of men for their direc-

tion and conviction : grammatical, rhetorical, and logical learning, the knowledge of the use of that reason which God gives us for imparting our minds and evidencing our conceptions unto one another. So then all true learning being a knowledge of the works of God, must needs be honourable and excellent.'

THE EVIDENCE OF EXPERIENCE in the History of the Church is DECIDEDLY IN FAVOUR OF LEARNING. Allowing that talents of the highest order may be joined with depravity of the deepest dye—as is eminently the case in the chief agent of evil, Satan—it must be asserted, that the highest created character is like that of the blessed angels, where piety and knowledge are combined in the greatest degree.

If we look at the history of the church, the brightest examples of ardent and useful piety have been found in men of great knowledge. The most honoured instruments in founding and carrying forward both the Jewish and Christian churches, were men eminent in learning as well as in piety. Moses, the lawgiver and leader of the Jews, was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and Paul was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel.

Much has been said of the ignorance of the first teachers of Christianity ; but those who dwell on their humble birth and situation, and their few acquirements, forget their extraordinary gifts and endowments. Bishop Horsley speaking, not of the sanctifying influence, but of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, says, ' Learning is to us the best substitute for that preternatural illumination of the understanding which was the privilege of the first preachers. They were qualified without any previous study, for the office to which they were called, because they had that other source of fuller and more certain information.—The knowledge which the Holy Spirit conveyed to the understanding of these chosen instruments of God, was the very same in kind, consisting of the same particulars, which in the ordinary way is attained in a more imperfect degree by study.'

The force, therefore of the objection, that the first Christians were illiterate, is taken away by the fact, that they were supernaturally assisted with all the learning which was requisite for their office. Ecolampadius justly observes to the Waldenses, 'we are not to tempt God as if He were to be expected to instruct us as He did the apostles, miraculously, without study on our part.' Indeed, we cannot have the local information which they had without much learning. Besides, while the great Apostle of the Gentiles was not destitute, as we have seen, of human learning naturally acquired; he both made use of that learning in defence of the gospel, and disputed with the learned Athenians on their own principles.

It is a very erroneous idea, that knowledge is prejudicial to faith. Religion is not the privilege of the ignorant. In fact, the worst enemies of Christianity have endeavoured to keep Christians in ignorance. We see this both in Paganism and Popery. The ages of ignorance were the ages when Popery was dominant: and in the time of Paganism, the emperor Julian, one of the most artful and bitter opponents which the Christian religion perhaps ever had, well aware of the powerful use which Christians had made of learning, refused permission to them to study the classics.*

* 'With a view to keep the church in ignorance of the arts of reasoning and philosophy, he forbade Christian schoolmasters to teach Gentile learning, lest being furnished, he said, with our armour, they make war upon us with our own weapons. Our learning is unnecessary to Christians, who are trained up to an illiterate rusticity, so that to believe is sufficient for them, and by this prohibition I only restore possessions to their proper owners.'

Mr. Milner adds, in a note—'In the same strain,' he says, 'if they [the Christian professors] think these authors give a false account of the most honourable things, let them betake themselves to the churches of the Galileans, and expound Matthew and Luke. Yet those of the [Christian] youth who please to go [to the Pagan schools] are not excluded.' So prudently did he provide for the progress of Hellenism, and for the downfall of Christian knowledge. He charges the Christians with the inconsistency of instructing people in classical learning, at the same time that they opposed the heathen mythology.' The account of La Bleterie concerning this matter is just, and his observation deserves to be quoted. 'To explain the classic authors, to commend them as models of language, of eloquence and taste, to unveil their beauties, &c., this is not proposing them as oracles of religion and morality.' Julian is pleased to confound two things so different, and to erect under the favour of this confusion, the puerile sophistry, which prevails through his whole edict. See Milner, Vol. II. p. 123.

The most useful labourers in the church of Christ have been men of learning. Not to mention many of the Fathers, how much do we owe to the learning of Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Ridley, Cranmer, Jewell, Usher, Hall, Leighton, and multitudes of others.

The revival of literature, and the reformation of the church were connected events. The Reformers felt strongly the importance of learning ; Luther says, 'I am persuaded that true divinity could not well be supported without the knowledge of letters : of this we have sad proof, for while learning was decayed and in ruins, theology fell too, and lay most wretchedly obscured. I am sure that the revelation and manifestation of the word of God would never have been so extensive and glorious as it is, if preparatorily, like so many John the Baptists smoothing the way, the knowledge of languages and good learning had not risen up amongst us. They are most exceedingly mistaken, who imagine that the knowledge of nature and true philosophy is of no use to a divine.' He says, in the Preface to an exposition of the 90th Psalm : 'There were at that time men, and more afterwards would arise, who despised theological studies, and indeed *all* studies ; there ought therefore to be some to proclaim the praises of God, and to disseminate the knowledge of his word.'

RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE IS PROFITABLE FOR ALL CLASSES. Laymen, and all Christians, are personally concerned in this subject. Men are too apt to think that the study of religion concerns ministers and not private Christians. Divinity, however, is not like medicine, or law, or navigation, which belong only to a particular class or profession ; every human being has an immortal soul, the care of which devolves mainly on himself. Every human being is dependent on God and Jesus Christ, and is infinitely concerned to know His character and will. All Christians are called *μαθηται*, disciples or scholars. Their very name implies that they are learners.

The extensive usefulness of such laymen as Bacon, Boyle, Hale, Pascal, Boerhaave, Haller, Johnson, Beattie,

Goode, and others, was closely connected with their general and religious knowledge and learning. Laymen are free from the suspicion of professional interest, and can therefore speak on religion with some advantages which a minister does not possess. The apostle, in the direction, *to leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and go on unto perfection*, requires Christians in general not to be content with a slight or superficial knowledge ; and supposes, that after a certain time all ought to be able to instruct others : *for the time, ye ought to be teachers*. This direction is not immediately addressed to ministers, but to Christians in general.

It is affecting sometimes to hear laymen deliberately avow their ignorance of religion, either as what does not concern them, or as an evidence of their superiority to vulgar prejudice. What a low, dark, and miserable mind must theirs be ! To be willingly and ostentatiously ignorant of that, which on the very face of it is the sublimest and most ennobling of all studies, relating to the great Lord of all, to both worlds and all ages ; and affecting the character, the conduct, and the present, the mental, the temporal, and the eternal happiness of the whole human race ! Surely this avowal can only be accounted for on the scriptural principle of *having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them*.

It is the testimony of Boyle, (in his Excellency of Theology,) ‘ For an ordinary naturalist to despise those that study the mysteries of religion, as much inferior to physical truths, is no less unreasonable than it were for a watchmaker, because he understands his own trade, to despise privy-counsellors, who are acquainted with the secrets of monarchs, and mysteries of state ; or than it were for a ship carpenter, because he understands more of the fabric of a vessel, to despise the admiral that is acquainted with the secret designs of the prince, and employed about the most important affairs.’

In what respect is theology not adapted to the body of

Christians? It is a science concerning the noblest subjects on which the mind of man can be occupied, it improves the student in piety, consoles him in affliction, and prepares him for the everlasting enjoyment of the Divine Object of his studies.

If it be thought a great thing to keep a man from the grave, sometimes for a few days, and still more to restore him to health, so that he may enjoy life for some years, even though with troublesome diet and remedies, theology has yet higher and better ends. It shows the way of attaining spiritual health, endless life, and perfect happiness.

The CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE TIMES SHOW THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDY. We live in a reading age, when education is almost universal, and men think and speak on all subjects with the utmost freedom. All classes of people read much, and religious persons must not be behind them, especially in that knowledge which directly affects religion. And though the end of our studies is not to exalt ourselves above others, yet *our profiting* in our studies, as in other things, ought to *appear to all men*.

The various sentiments and doctrines which have arisen since the apostolic age, and are now abroad among men; and the history of the church, since that time, require knowledge and learning, if men would themselves discern what is truth, or be useful to those around them. A religious man, without any knowledge of history, or general information, or any comprehensive view even of the various parts of his religion, will speak with immense disadvantage, if called into discussion with well-informed persons of the world, or men of erroneous sentiments who may have a greater speculative knowledge of religion. He may thus, to his great grief, be an occasion of offence to others; and religion, which is dearer to him than life itself, may materially suffer from that incapacity and ignorance from which diligence in study would have saved him. Dr. Buchanan, after showing that God honours human acquirements, when used in subordination to His grace, says, 'Let

us then honour human learning. Every branch of knowledge which a good man possesses, he may apply to some good purpose. If he possessed the knowledge of an archangel, he might apply it all to the advantage of men and the glory of God.'

MANY OBJECTIONS HAVE BEEN MADE AGAINST THE USEFULNESS OF LEARNING.—It is objected that learned men are sometimes infidels, and often merely nominal Christians; and the Apostle himself says, *not many wise men after the flesh* are called. This indeed is an important and humbling lesson to those who trust in human wisdom, which can never of itself attain divine grace, and often hinders and hurts the soul. It has pleased God to make manifest the inefficiency of human acquirements of themselves, that He might the more display the necessity and excellence of His own grace; but in every age there have been those who have been bright examples that piety and great attainments in learning are perfectly consistent. It was an old reproach against an Apostle, *Much learning doth make thee mad*; Paul, though learned, was not mad.* Men of both learning and piety are requisite to convict the errors of ignorant pious men on the one hand, and to answer the errors of learned wicked men on the other. There are those who turn knowledge, and argument, and human wisdom against religion, but there are assuredly infinitely superior knowledge, superior argument, and superior wisdom, *on the side of religion*; and this has been and will be

* Lord Bacon, answering the objection of *divines*, against learning, says, 'It is an assured truth, and a conclusion of experience, that a little or superficial knowledge of philosophy may incline the mind of man to atheism, but a farther proceeding therein brings the mind back again to religion; for in the entrance of philosophy, when the second causes which are next unto the senses offer themselves to the mind of man, if it dwell and stay there, it may induce some oblivion of the highest cause; but when a man passes on farther, and sees the dependance of causes on the work of Providence; then according to the allegory of the poets, he will easily believe that the highest link of nature's chain must be tied to the foot of Jupiter's chair. To conclude, therefore, let no man, on a weak conceit of sobriety, or an ill-applied moderation, think or maintain that a man can search too far, or be too well studied in the book of God's word, or in the book of God's works; divinity or philosophy; but rather let men endeavour an endless progress or proficiency in both; only let men beware that they apply both to charity and not to swelling; to use and not to ostentation: and again, that they do not unwisely mingle or confound these learnings together.'

manifested to the unspeakable advantage of truth. Religion receives its due homage when the highest intellect and deepest learning, when Bacon and Newton, yield subjection to it.

If there are learned men to oppose the gospel, there ought to be still more learned men to meet such opponents, and to show that the very depths of learning contain nothing but invincible arguments for the truth of the gospel, and all its great and cheering doctrines. And after all, though learning has been possessed by the wicked, the learning of ungodly men has not been the cause of their wickedness, but merely the occasion of manifesting it. Nay, their learning has been of use to others. The Scribes among the Jews preserved the Scriptures, and the learning of worldly men, whether physicians, lawyers, and historians, or even divines, has yet often been beneficial to their country, and made subservient to religion. God thus continues to spoil the Egyptians, and make their jewels and their treasures presents and gifts to His church.

If pious persons are prejudiced against learning, from seeing the way in which learned men have perverted the gospel, they should also consider that want of literature is no security for a pure gospel. Men of boldness, talent, and fluency, who may be very illiterate, will press forward, pretend to extraordinary light, and draw multitudes after them, when it is nothing more than *speaking great swelling words of vanity*, and thus *allure through the lusts of the flesh those that for a while were escaped from them who live in error*. 2 Peter ii. 18.

If you say that there are many different opinions among the learned, it is true ; but there is among all real Christians an ample temple of divine truth, which is open and common to all ; and the very differences should only lead you to a more close adherence to the divine record yourself, and a large spirit of charity to differing brethren.

If you object that there are so many mysteries (which seem rather multiplied than diminished by learned men) burdening religion,—Boyle well replies, ‘ if they must be

called burdens, they are such burdens as are feathers to a hawk, which instead of hindering his flight by their weight, enable him to soar toward heaven, and take a larger prospect of things than if he had not feathers he could possibly do.'

Besides, LEARNING FURNISHES US WITH MUCH REAL ENJOYMENT. Surely it is one of our greatest privileges, that living so many hundred years from the mighty dead, we can by means of their writings converse with them more intimately, than if they now lived in our neighbourhood : that we have the full benefit of their best and choicest, their most mature and deliberate thoughts, in the clearest method, on the most important of all subjects : and that all ages are thus made present to our minds, render to us instructive information, and edify and comfort us.

The advantages of books, and of a well-furnished study, are thus set forth by Bishop Hall : ' The thoughts of our deliberations are most accurate : these we vent into our papers. What a happiness is it that without all offence of necromancy, I may here call up any of the ancient worthies of learning, whether human or divine, and confer with them of all my doubts ! that I can at pleasure summon whole synods of reverend fathers and acute doctors from all the coasts of the earth, to give their well-studied judgments in all points of question which I propose. Neither can I cast my eye casually upon any of these silent masters, but I must learn somewhat. It is a wantonness to complain of choice. No law binds us to read all : but the more we can take in and digest, the better-liking must the mind needs be. Blessed be God that hath set up so many clear lamps in his church : now none but the wilfully blind can plead darkness. And blessed be the memory of these his faithful servants, that have left their blood, their spirits, their lives, in these precious papers, and have willingly wasted themselves into these enduring monuments to give light to others.'—Hall's Works. Vol. VI. p. 166.

Mr. Montgomery has some striking remarks on the advantages to be derived from the talents of others. He says — ‘ It is the prerogative of genius to confer a measure of itself on inferior intelligences. In reading the works of Milton, Bacon, and Newton, thoughts greater than the growth of our own minds are transplanted into them, and feelings more profound, sublime, or comprehensive, are insinuated amidst our ordinary train ; while in the eloquence with which they are clothed, we learn a new language worthy of the new ideas that are created in us. Of how much pure and exalted enjoyment is he ignorant, who never entertained, as angels, the bright and loftier emanations of loftier intellects than his own ! By habitual communion with superior spirits, we not only are enabled to think their thoughts, speak their dialects, feel their emotions, but our own thoughts are refined, our scanty language is enriched, our common feelings are elevated ; and though we never attain their standard, yet by keeping company with them, we shall rise above our own, as trees growing in the society of a forest, are said to draw each other up into shapely and stately proportion, while field and hedge-row stragglers, exposed to all weathers, never reach their full stature, luxuriance, and beauty.’

It is not every reader that derives all these advantages from the thoughts of others : much depends on the character of the student, and of his studies ; we have here however brought before us a very valuable statement of the advantages which may be derived from the superior mind and talents of others.

If we would not be confined and cramped by the views of the place, and the age, and the circumstances in which we live, and the party with which we associate, and would rise to the ground of higher usefulness and more extended blessing, we must read works of other countries and other ages and other classes of men, and take from an elevated position an enlarged view of the minds of men, *comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

Theology is, like the heavens, full of stars which appear

not to a careless spectator ; but a diligent contemplator, with suitable helps, will find new worlds of glory in every part. The ministers of Christ, especially, should be continually growing in religious acquirements, and adding to that ministerial furniture of mind which will enable them to bring out of their treasury things new and old. It will both take them out of scenes of trial and temptation in the world, and also fit them for honourable and useful services in the church.

Yet to the due exaltation of Divine grace, and the depression of human pride, it is in conclusion strenuously maintained that God has greatly blessed and honoured men, like Bunyan, not without knowledge, but without learning ; and has left learned men, and especially those whose hearts are not devoted to their heavenly Master, barren and unfruitful.

Speaking of philosophical sciences, Augustine thus excellently, in his confessions, distinguishes between the illiterate Christian and the speculative philosopher. ‘ Unhappy is that man who knows all these things and knows not thee ; but blessed is he who knows thee, though he knows not these things. But he who knows both thee and them, is not happier on their account, but on account of thee alone is happy, if knowing thee he glorify thee as God, and be thankful, and be not vain in his imaginations. For as he is in a better situation, who possesses a tree, and is thankful to thee for the use of it, though he knows neither its height, nor breadth, than he who measures it, and counts all its branches, and neither possesses it, nor knows nor has learned his Creator, so the believer, whose property all the riches of the world are, and who having nothing, yet possesses all things, by cleaving to thee whom all things serve, is indisputably better than the most knowing natural philosopher upon earth, who lives in the neglect of thee.’

CHAPTER II.

THE INFLUENCE OF PRACTICAL HOLINESS ON
THEOLOGICAL STUDIES.

HOLY tempers and a holy conduct are essential to our attaining the wise and great end, the happy experience, and the true enjoyment of divine knowledge. No natural talents, nor any acquired learning, can supply the place of Christian graces, or be a substitute for them. As the first sin was preferring knowledge to obedience, and the effect was a darkened understanding and a sinful and miserable life, so it is now. Sin produces ignorance as well as misery. The consideration of this subject is seasonable and important; as some have asserted, that man is not accountable for his belief; but the Bible shows us that the origin of infidelity is the wickedness of the heart, (John iii. 18, 19.) Our moral character has an immense influence on our opinions.

There is, indeed, an extended connection in all parts of God's ways of instruction, and leading us to himself in each branch of Divine truth. They resemble a rich and magnificent chain of gold, in which not only each separate link is exquisitely finished and wrought, but it is united to similar links, and thus is made subservient to farther ends, as were the chains of gold on the neck of Aaron, supporting on his breast that breast-plate, in which were the Urim and Thummim, the lights and perfections of the church.

There is also a beautiful re-action arising from our own

conduct. One thing affects another, and the impression made returns again, so that there is a reciprocal and endless progression of good or evil, according to the conduct of the moral agent. This makes sin a tremendous evil ; this makes holiness infinitely desirable ; for the influence of either will never be exhausted, but will affect immortal beings through eternal ages. Nor is there any remedy for the evil of sin, but in that great salvation, which stops the contagion, and imparts the counteracting and healthful spirit of divine grace.

This moral re-action is always at work, and in seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, we are most effectually securing every other good. As Solomon, by seeking wisdom rather than riches, gained both ; so by that which is *the beginning of wisdom, even, by humility and the fear of the Lord, are riches, and honour, and life.*

Revealed truth is not given to us in an accurately arranged system, or in an orderly and minute statement of its different ramifications in one lengthened discussion, but in history, and in promises, and precepts given as occasion arose from time to time ; the aim of all which is to promote practical holiness, in attaining which we fail not to obtain saving truth, and without which we cannot know God ; for *without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* God is to be known by the life and experience of the Christian rather than by bare study. *O taste and see that the Lord is good !*

ALL SIN HAS A BLINDING INFLUENCE UPON THE HUMAN MIND. When men's deeds are evil, it causes them to love darkness rather than light. It hinders the just perception of spiritual things. *None of the wicked shall understand.* The too eager pursuit of even *lawful* occupations engages and distracts the mind of the worldly man, and leaves him no time for the calm, and patient, and steady application of his mind to the discovery of divine truth. If he asks, *What is truth,* even from the first source of truth, he has no patience to wait for the answer. To such an one, invisible things appear distant and uncertain,

and if of a superior nature, yet so remote as rather to be admired, than desired or pursued. The gratification of the lusts of their own hearts led the heathen to change *the truth of God into a lie*. Rom. i. 25, 26. The indulgence of unholy tempers and affections, such as pride, envy, malice, impurity, ambition, gives a real distaste to the opposing truths of Christianity. And when these sins break out in the life, and *lust has conceived and brought forth sin*, then, even if truth had been previously acquired, it is held or confined and detained *in unrighteousness*. Rom. i. 18. *When they knew God and glorified him not as God, they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened*, and one sin led on to another, till they sunk into the very depths of idolatry.

Archbishop Usher says, 'All sins are in the epistle to the Hebrews termed ignorances (Heb. ix. 7, compared with Lev. xvi. 16, 17), and sinners ignorant and erring persons (Heb. v. 2); because, however, in the general the understanding may be informed rightly, yet when particular actions come to be resolved upon, men's perverse wills and inordinate affections cloud their minds, and lead them out of the way. That, therefore, is to be accounted sound knowledge which sinks from the brain into the heart, and from thence breaks forth into action (setting head, heart, hand, and all a-work), and so much only must thou reckon thyself to know in Christianity, as thou art able to make use of in practice.' He quotes James ii. 18; iii. 13; and 1 John ii. 3, 4, to illustrate this.

Here, then, we see where the Christian will bend his main strength: he must not cultivate gifts, rather than graces; attainments in knowledge, rather than attainments in holiness: studies must not come before or displace prayer; conferences for acquiring knowledge, before conferences for acquiring spirituality of mind and Christian experience.

But let us endeavour to illustrate these general remarks, by a particular consideration of the influence of holiness on knowledge. These do indeed mutually influence and

promote each other. *His divine power hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.* 2 Peter i. 3.

We cannot attain to holiness without a measure of knowledge, and every step in that attainment prepares for increasing knowledge. *Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.* We cannot limit the mode in which the Holy Spirit either commences or carries on His work within us : as He divides *to every man severally as He will* ; so He works in various ways, and in such order as pleases Him : sometimes by first convincing the intellect, sometimes by exciting the imagination, and sometimes by touching the affections ; but the result is one,—to be renewed after the divine image. There is a general tendency ;—the tendency of all truth is to promote holiness—and of all error to famish the soul. The ways of false prophets are *lascivious* ways (2 Peter ii. 2. See margin and Griesbach). The tendency of all holiness is to enlighten the mind, and of all sin to darken and obscure the truth.

Holiness, the work of the Spirit in the heart of man, (1 Thess. ii. 13.) is a term of large meaning, implying in its full import, entire purity from all sin, and entire dedication to God, and conformity to his will. In a sinful creature like man, it can only be attained by faith in Christ, and through his Spirit, and it is continued by constant exercise of the same lively faith, and communications of the same Spirit. It has various parts and degrees, and its influence on knowledge may be seen in each of these.

CONVERSION TO GOD (John iii. 3–5.) is a first step in Christian holiness. It implies a total change in the inner man ; a commencement of a new life ; and our Lord declares, that without it a man *cannot see the kingdom of God*. St. Paul also asserts, *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned ; but he that is spiritual (αυακρινει) discerneth all things*. Regeneration is then indispensably necessary for a full view and a true taste and relish of divine truth. As

a blind man cannot discern or delight in colours, so an unregenerate man is incompetent to discover and delight in the true glories of revelation. He wants that sense which would enable him rightly to discriminate truth from error, and greater truths from lesser truths. He has no spiritual taste or relish for evangelical verities. When regenerate by the Spirit, we shall spontaneously, as it were, distaste views, contrary to the mind of the Spirit—views which tend to exalt man, to degrade the Saviour, to lower the moral standard, or to make sin a slight evil ; and, though they are contrary to our fallen nature, we shall love and maintain the opposite scriptural truths. Let us then pray for the promised new heart and new spirit, (Ezekiel xxxvi. 26, 27.) In the words of Bishop Taylor—‘ Without this new creation, this new principle of life, we may hear the word of God, but we can never understand it, we hear the sound but are never the better.’ Speaking afterwards of the different effects which truth produces, and asking the reason of the difference, he gives the following answer, ‘The one understands by nature, and the other by grace ; the one by human learning, the other by divine ; the one reads the scriptures without, the other within ; the one understands as a son of man, the other as a son of God ; the one perceives by the proportion of the world, and the other by the measures of the Spirit ; the one understands by reason, and the other by love ; and therefore, he does not only understand the sermons of the Spirit, and perceives their meaning, but he pierces deeper and knows the meaning of that meaning ; that is, the secret of the Spirit, that which is spiritually discerned, that which gives life to the proposition, and activity to the soul.’

COMMUNION WITH GOD is a most important means of divine knowledge. There is a higher study than that derived from acquaintance with human writings ; there is a communion beyond that of communion with men ; there is a daily and hourly converse with God, the Father of Lights, who is *Light* itself, and in whom is no darkness at

all; a philosopher may be ignorant of it, but the most learned, if pious, will esteem this to be his best source of highest knowledge, and it is one which the most illiterate Christian is privileged to enjoy. This high and holy study truly enlightens, it really ennobles, it invariably blesses the soul.* The believer, in the lively exercise of grace, thirsts after this supremely : *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee. As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.* Christians in the full enjoyment of grace can say, *Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ.* This high and holy fellowship raises us above the fear of man, and leads us to search out for, and be content with, and rely upon the bare word of God, and to profess that word before the world. Had not Luther been a man of much communion with God, he would never have attained his eminent religious knowledge ; or confessed it before men in that way which made him such an unequalled blessing in the Reformation.

FAITH AND LOVE are eminent parts of Christian holiness. They are, when genuine, united together. St. James considers faith without love as a nonentity—a *dead faith*—a faith that cannot be shown. Now faith is the very organ and sense by which divine truth is received, and the main grace through which it is profitable. (Heb. iv. 2.) Love, again, is that state of mind which is most eminently adapted to a profitable study : *The deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish arises hence, they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.* Love to God and his truth, will stir up the heart and quicken the

* The remarks of Thomas à Kempis are appropriate and striking : ' Let all teachers be silent, let the whole creation be dumb before thee, and do thou only speak to my soul—lest being only outwardly warned, but not inwardly quickened, I die and be found unfruitful ; lest the word heard and not obeyed, known and not loved, professed and not kept, turn to my condemnation ! Speak, therefore, Lord, for thy servant heareth : thou only hast the words of everlasting life ! O speak to the comfort of my soul, to the renovation of my heavenly nature, and to the eternal praise and glory of thy own name ! ' Arrowsmith has similar ideas, saying, in addressing God, ' There are within me two great gulphs, a mind conscious of more truth, and a will capable of more good than finite beings can afford. Thou only canst fill them, who art the first truth and the chief good.'

soul to a holy diligence for further discoveries of both. The same graces will enable us to persevere in maintaining the truth, according to the direction, *Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.* 2 Tim. i. 13. Where there is the filial confidence and love of a child, its teachableness and tractableness, its ready reliance on its parent's word, and its affectionate heart toward that parent, then is there that state of mind which is best calculated most to advance us in the kingdom of heaven. Matt. xviii. 3, 4. *Nathanael*, the Israelite without guile, *believed* Christ on the first declaration of the Messiah, and on his manifesting this ready faith was assured, *Thou shalt see greater things than these* : through love to Christ we obtain farther communications of divine knowledge, *He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.*

THE TEMPER AND DISPOSITIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN in general have an important influence on his acquiring right views of divine truth. This might be shown at length in contrition, repentance, hope, humility, meekness, long-suffering, and the like. But let us mark it in that which is pre-eminently a Christian grace, humility. *With the lowly is wisdom.* Prov. xi. 2. *He giveth grace unto the humble.* James iv. 6 ; 1 Peter v. 5. *Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.* Matt. xviii. 4. *The meek will he guide in judgment.* Psalm xxv. 9. The whole system of Christianity is of a humbling character. It places man in his true nothingness before God, (Gal. vi. 3.) and pride is therefore the grand obstruction to a cordial reception of its pure and simple principles : hence have arisen those self-righteous systems which have been invented to evade the gospel. But let a man be contrite, self-abased, and poor in spirit, and the main difficulties of receiving divine truth are removed. Salvation by free grace will be his only hope ; giving all glory to God, and taking all shame to himself, will be easy to him ; the aid of the Holy Spirit will be his

highest consolation : every doctrine of Christianity is peculiarly adapted to the state of a humble and contrite spirit. O what a test and touchstone of character to the whole human race is the gospel of Jesus Christ ! It discriminates, and discloses, and develops every mind which it touches, and the proud in rejecting it are rejected, and the scorers in scorning it are scorned, (Prov. iii. 34.) and the meek are taught his way, and the humble in receiving it are exalted. If Moses was eminent for learning and wisdom ; he was also the meekest of men. If Paul had the deepest insight into the mysteries of the gospel, his heart also burned with the most intense love to his Saviour. A serious, teachable, submissive, diligent, pure, candid, upright, and devout spirit, is the very temper of the Christian, and in that temper is the prepared ground in which the truths of religion readily grow and bring forth fruit. Matt. xiii. 23 ; Acts xvii. 11, 12.

Another part of holiness is THE FEAR OF THE LORD : and very influential is this fear to the acquisition of knowledge : *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.* Prov. i. 7. *The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom.* Prov. xv. 33. This fear will be a guard against rashly adopting sentiments which have little or no foundation in his word, and will lead us to unfeigned submission to the plain statements of that word. It will keep us in that child-like and humble frame of mind, which is peculiarly favourable to the ready reception of truth. Infidel writers have almost invariably manifested a want of this grace. A holy reverence, and a filial fear of God, and a dread of displeasing him, will also raise the soul above the fear of man, so that man's word will no longer be our ultimate guide, his threatenings our great terror, or his promises our highest hope. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant.* And as this fear is the commencement of knowledge, so it is (in the deliberate conviction to which the wisest mind after attaining all knowledge came) our highest good. Eccles. xii. 13. It is also the highest and best result of all acquirements.

After Job had gone through the knowledge of natural things, he comes, under divine inspiration, to this conclusion : *Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom ; and to depart from evil is understanding.* Job xxviii. 28.

SIMPLICITY OF PURPOSE TO DO THE WILL OF GOD is a leading characteristic of the holy man, and this is essential to the right perception of truth. The honest ground was the good ground, and the only ground which profitably received the seed of the word. Luke viii. 15. *If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.* If our great and leading aim be wrong : if to acquire riches, honours, or pleasures of this life, be the chief objects which we have in view, it is like a disease or cataract in the eye, it darkens every part of spiritual truth. But if the heart be converted, and our supreme and leading objects be spiritual, and holy, and heavenly, we shall be prepared readily to admit those truths of which the Bible is so full respecting the vanity of earthly things ; we shall acquiesce in, and receive those statements which are opposed to our worldly aggrandizement, and promote our higher and everlasting good. The *wisdom* of worldly men is in truth the greatest *folly*, and will be universally in the result acknowledged to be so, but while they hold it to be wisdom, all their judgment of things will be perverted. *When thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness.* Sin, and all the lusts of the flesh, like a dense mist, obscure the glory of truth. We all know how fogs and mists can veil the splendour of the sun, so that when they intervene, that glorious luminary has lost almost all its glory : the lesser light of the moon, in a clear atmosphere, has a greater brightness. Thus, when indulging in the lusts of the flesh, we are living in the low and damp ground of fogs and mists, and cannot see the light of sacred truth, however clearly and brightly it may be shining on those dwelling in the higher regions of practical holiness. But on the other hand, devotedness to God will help us clearly to discriminate between what is vain, and trifling, and worthless ; and what is holy, and

wise, and excellent, and we shall not spend our days and our nights on things, the knowledge of which will neither glorify God nor benefit man. *God giveth to a man that is good in his sight, wisdom, and knowledge, and joy ; but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God.* Eccles. ii. 26.

CONFESSING OUR LORD CHRIST BEFORE OUR FELLOW CREATURES is another help in the way to divine knowledge. *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God : and we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love.* 1 John iv. 15, 16. A faithful profession of the gospel calls for those dispositions which are so much dwelt upon in the divine record, faith, hope, love, and holy courage ; and we understand them in exercising them with a clearness infinitely beyond what any speculative notion can give. The actings of this confession of Christ as it respects others, often painfully call forth and disclose the enmity of the natural heart, and thus furnish a practical commentary illustrating the scriptural description of that enmity. We get a new and lively understanding on actual experience of statements which come in every page of the Bible. We find religion to be the same from the beginning, and that we, like Moses, if we would belong to the true church, must choose *rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.* But as St. John intimates in the passage above quoted, this confession of Christ is connected with more immediate communion with God, and a more rich discovery of his love. Afflictions arising from a faithful profession are a special blessing. Phil. i. 29. He walks closely with God, he knows much of God, he greatly enjoys God, who in faith, humility, and love, boldly confesses Christ before men : the very crosses, opposition, contempt, and mortifications, which he has to pass through, lead him to more intimate communion with that heavenly Parent for whose cause he suffers. How spiritual and heavenly are the letters of

Bradford from prison, and of Rutherford written while confined in Aberdeen for his confession of Christ !

READY OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S PRECEPTS directly tends to lead us to embrace all the main principles of the gospel. *The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine.* Every step in obedience more and more shews us the truth of scriptural doctrines. The standard of obedience is absolute perfection ; to love God with all our heart, and to love our neighbour as ourselves ; to be perfect as God is perfect. When really aiming to reach this standard, as every Christian will aim to do, he will feel that he has to maintain a constant conflict with opposing dispositions, and that there are multiplied hindrances within his own heart ; he will thus perpetually be led to see how short he comes, how evil his heart, how entire his dependence on divine grace for daily pardon and daily strength ; he will see the impossibility of acceptance but in the beloved Son, and will be prepared to admit the elements, at least of those deeper doctrines which show us the wonderful love of God in originating our individual salvation before time began, and in engaging his power to perfect it in everlasting felicity when time shall be no more. Our Lord observes, that on love to God and love to man, *the two great commandments, hang all the law and the prophets.* Errors in religion spring from the neglect of them ; the true plan of revelation will be comprehended according as we simply and heartily and honestly aim to fulfil them.

FAMILY INSTRUCTION is a step to divine knowledge, as well as a material point in the Christian character of every head of a family. *Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do—for I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.* God gave to Abraham a peculiar insight into his purposes. Family instruction however, in general, is a school for the teacher as well as the taught. A faithful head of a Christian household will daily morning and evening read a portion of Scripture to his family ; this

cannot be done without placing the scriptures in a new aspect to his mind. He will try to add practical observations to this portion, either gathered from other works, or arising from his own meditations. These practical observations, gathered for direct and particular edification, will further tend to promote and increase the best kind of knowledge. And while there will be this effect in the family, the master will be ripening day by day unto all the full maturity and rich experience of Christian wisdom.

VISITING THE POOR is another most instructive duty. All who have in a right spirit been thus occupied, will have found it quite a school of divinity. The very best lessons in divine knowledge are there acquired. We see the practical working of truth on the mind : we learn what touches the heart ; what truths respond again. The poor are more free from some of those artificial trammels which a highly cultivated and refined state of society has thrown around the upper ranks of life. They express their feelings more openly and strongly, and having often been greatly exercised, their faith and Christian experience are sometimes very great. One of the best universities, and one far too much unvisited, is the retired apartment of suffering poverty, the cottage or the garret of the afflicted ; and one of the best lectures in divinity, and most fruitful of Christian conferences, is conversation on the things of God, with those *poor of this world* whom God hath *chosen, rich in faith*. Many a minister has there first learnt the lesson of saving knowledge for his own soul, and thence has carried the best lessons which he could give to his people. Christian student, then ever remember, that one leading part of *pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction*.

We would once more illustrate this subject by the Christian's GROWTH IN GRACE : *The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day* : there is the light of knowledge, and the light of holiness, and both advance together in the path of the just.

Our Lord told the Jews who believed on him, *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed ; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* John viii. 31, 32. Knowledge and growth in grace are united in the direction, *Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ ;* and the connection shows that this direction has an immediate reference to those things which are *hard to be understood*, and being *led away with the error of the wicked*. The Apostle Paul in a similar way connects *being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.* Col. i. 10. The experienced Christian has acquired a deep insight of his natural depravity ; he has seen his weakness and his tendency to fall into the worst sins when left to himself, and thence Jesus and his great salvation become increasingly understood, and increasingly precious. God reveals himself to *the pure in heart*, (Matt. v. 8,) and as the Christian advances in purity, in deadness to the world, and devotedness to God, he sees more of the divine glory in the face of Jesus Christ, and more admires that wonderful system of grace which rescues the polluted sinner from the mire of sin, and makes him the child of God, the heir of heavenly glory, and meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. In that rich cluster of evangelical graces mentioned by the Apostle Peter, we see the reciprocal influence of advanced piety and knowledge fully displayed. Knowledge is there seen surrounded with lovely graces and virtues.

Let no student then think that his studying hours are lost because he is not always reading, but sometimes more actively and directly obeying ; because he is not always in his library, but sometimes engaged in visiting the poor and in the direct service of God.* For every thing there is a

* Baxter says, in his Reformed Pastor, 'If you grow not extensively in knowledge, you will by this way of diligent practice obtain the intensive and more excellent growth. If you know not so many things as others, you will know the great things better than they ; for this serious dealing with sinners for their salvation will help you to far deeper apprehensions of the saving principles of religion than you can get by any other means.—By serious talking of everlasting things and teaching the creed, or some short catechism, you may grow more in knowledge, [though not in the knowledge of more things,]

time and season ; and if we are wise to discern the seasonable duty, and steadily pursue it, and duly improve it, knowledge and holiness will be progressively advancing as in a divine school ; the lessons may vary in different parts of the day, but the general improvement of the scholar is advancing in each lesson, and by these different parts pursued together, the full ripeness of the Christian character is attained.

The most edifying works in the Christian's library have not been written by those confined exclusively to their closets. The Cyprians and Augustines, the Luthers and Calvins, the Cranmers and Jewells, the Owens and Baxters, the Halls and Leightons of former days, were men so full of active duty, that one is astonished that they could ever find time for their varied writings. Had they not been so occupied in works of righteousness, they would never have given us those rich experimental and practical treatises which we have received from them.

Let us then be willing to resign our studies for our more practical duties, even when most intensely engaged in them ; even though a chain of thought may perhaps be broken which we cannot afterwards recover. The self-denying efforts will not be without an ample recompence in the very studies which we seem to be deserting.

But let us, on the other hand, be diligent to resume (when the opportunity is again returned to us) that close study which ordinarily is essentially requisite to enable us to acquire that enlarged knowledge which leads to extended usefulness. And more especially let us begin our studies with getting our hearts into a right frame, remembering our Christian principles, and sending up our aspirations to the Father of Lights, and the Giver of all Wisdom.

The Christian's life is a daily course of visible Lessons in Theology. As Christ displayed the glory of the Father,

and prove much wiser men than if you spent that time in studying common, or curious, and less necessary things.—He will be the ablest physician, lawyer, and divine also, that adds practice and experience proportionably to his studies."—Baxter's Works, Vol. xiv. p. 297-8, 365.

so the glory of the Father, and of the Son, is to be displayed to the world in the work of the Spirit on the hearts of Christians. Their truth, love, joy, peace, holiness, and happiness are to manifest the invisible God to man, so that he may be glorified. What a book is the Christian life ! What a display of God's truth to all his fellow-creatures, is the conduct of the Christian ! It is the most practical book in the world ; it is of all appeals to the understanding and the heart, the most eloquent, and touching, and convincing.

We cannot close this interesting subject, without adverting to that heavenly country to which the Christian is going, where both knowledge and holiness shall be perfected, and yet increasing through eternity. O blessed region, where *his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads* ; knowledge will act upon holiness, and holiness upon knowledge, in an endless advance and progression ; and beholding our Saviour *when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is !*

Christians, with what diligence, then, should we *follow that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord !*

CHAPTER III.

THE DIVINE TEACHING WHICH GOD HAS PROMISED.

THE happy influence of practical holiness on the attainment of religious knowledge, is in perfect harmony and consistency with the high hope which God has given us of Divine teaching. Holiness is itself one gracious and principal effect of heavenly instruction : hence David prays, *Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God : thy Spirit is good ; lead me into the land of uprightness*, Psalm cxliii. 10. ' And hence St. Paul describes Christians as *taught of God to love one another*.

In Bishop Taylor's valuable sermon, preached to the University of Dublin, showing by what means scholars may become most learned and useful, he observes, ' In this inquiry I must take one thing for a ' præcognitum,' that every good man is *θεοδιδακτος*, he is taught of God ; and indeed unless he teach us, we shall make but ill scholars ourselves, and worse guides to others. *Nemo potest Deum scire, nisi a Deo doceatur* ; no one can know God unless he be taught of God, said Irenæus.'

We allow and press, as has been seen, the importance of human studies. In the forcible words of Melancthon, ' the scripture cannot be understood theologically unless it be first understood grammatically.' But things subordinate are not opposed to that to which they are subordinate.

Human sciences are to be learned from human authors, and by human instruction or research. Astronomy, navigation, geography, anatomy, and the like, except in pe-

culiar circumstances, (Exod. xxxi. 3,) are to be acquired with that general assistance and blessing of God which is common to all : but there is a peculiarity about the study of divinity, answering to its unspeakable magnitude and importance ; we need, in addition to all human instruction, divine teaching. Divinity is taught by God himself, both as regards its principles in his word, and their right reception in the understanding, and their full influence on the heart. It is the more needful to dwell on this subject, as there is nothing that we are naturally more prone to overlook ; and yet the whole of a happy result of faithful and diligent study depends entirely on our attaining this aid, and being partakers of this blessing. No directions can at all ultimately and savingly profit us, but as the Divine Spirit gives them life and efficacy.

The testimony of Scripture is delightfully distinct and decisive on this point. Let any candid mind consider such passages as occur so repeatedly in the 119th Psalm ; for instance, verses 12, 18, 27, 33, 66, 73, 124, 125, 135, 144 ; or Psalm xxv. 4, 5, 8, 9 ; or the promise of the Holy Spirit (Luke xi. 13.) ; or of wisdom from above (James i. 5, 17, 18.) : let him bear in mind that the petitions for divine teaching are offered up by persons in possession of the inspired word ; and the promises made to men of certain dispositions (Psalm xxv.) ; and we see not how it is possible to avoid the conclusion, that the scriptures do very decidedly and explicitly lead us to the full hope that, in addition to the inspired word, and to give us a due understanding of it, God is ready to bestow, on those that ask, divine teaching ; a teaching without which we cannot truly know and receive sacred truth ; but by the aid of which we shall be taught his statutes, so as to become wise unto salvation.

May we ever have that humility of mind which led John the Baptist to say, *A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.* John iii. 27. Thence come all our light and all our honour, all our usefulness and all our happiness.

This divine teaching is peculiarly promised under the gospel dispensation ; *all thy children shall be taught of the Lord.* Isa. liv. 13. It is the superior excellence of the new beyond the old covenant, that God has promised that all truly interested in it, from the least to the greatest, shall have divine illumination. *They shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord ; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.* It is true that spiritual blessings come by hearing, but only as God in his sovereign love gives the increase. It is true that there are different degrees of knowledge, and that due means must be used to increase our knowledge, (1 John ii. 21.) : yet it is perfectly clear that Christians in general have a teaching beyond and superior to man's teaching ; seeing St. John says to all, *Ye need not that any man teach you : but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.* 1 John ii. 27.

Nothing can be more important than such promises. Amidst the countless variety of opinions, formed even by those who study the sacred records,—amidst the multitude of religious controversies of every kind,—amidst the bustle and distractions of the various occupations of life, pressing on our immediate attention for our necessary maintenance, or for our continual welfare, O how great the necessity and the value of an infallible Teacher !

‘Yes,’ urge the Romanists : ‘and such a teacher we present you in *our* church ; a human, yet an abiding and an infallible guide.’ Alas ! all pretences to a human guide of this character are disproved, not only as God has never promised such a teacher, but as those by whom the claim has been advanced, whether they be popes or councils, have maintained and promulgated perfectly opposite opinions. Even teachers rendered infallible under a divine inspiration, and generally allowed to be such, could not wholly prevent different opinions respecting important truths. We see this in the Apostolic age. The apostles were living, they were the authors of the Christian books,

they were divinely inspired ; yet even in their day there was a *Diotrephes* ; there were *evil men and seducers*, there were *false teachers*. There was no want of light and evidence as to truth, but the want of a sanctified heart to receive it ; so that, even apostolic authority could not prevent heresy. If *they* could not, how vain must be the hopes of uninspired teachers, whose pretences to infallibility are rendered perfectly nugatory by the interminable disputes as to where it is lodged.

The actual state of man sufficiently accounts for this tendency to different opinions. Man is a fallen creature, with many sinful dispositions, full of pride and vanity, seeking distinction and self-elevation. Christianity meets and opposes every sin. While men's deeds are evil, they will try in all ways to change a standard which thwarts every corruption ; or to make that very standard a means of earthly and individual glory. These things necessarily produce great differences, and show the need and importance of a teaching beyond man's, which shall change the inner man, renew the heart, and dispose our minds to attend to, and duly receive and comprehend, spiritual and eternal things.

Besides the corruption of the heart, let it never be forgotten that there is a malignant spirit *who worketh in the children of disobedience*. He is the great Deceiver. He first led Eve into fatal error, and the Apostolic caution is of great importance : *I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ*.

The distinction of the whole human race into two classes, *the righteous and the wicked*, illustrates this subject. Dr. Buchanan, preaching at Cambridge, and speaking of the present as an era of light, which he proves by the efforts now making to spread the gospel, says : ' It is of vast consequence to the purity and perpetuity of our church, that those students who are preparing to enter it, should have just views on this subject. There is one fact which ought frequently to be illustrated to them, as being the foundation

on which they are to form a judgment on this and other parts of the Divine dispensation. It is the following :—

‘ It is an undoubted truth, constantly asserted by scripture, and demonstrated by experience, that there have ever been two descriptions of persons in the Church. They are denominated by our Saviour, *the children of light and the children of this world* ; and again, *the children of the wicked one and the children of the kingdom*. Matt. xiii. 38. These different terms originate entirely from our receiving that illumination which God, who cannot lie, has promised to give to them that ask him. For if a man supplicate the Father of Lights for his good and perfect gift, with a humble and believing spirit, he will soon be sensible of the effect on his own mind.—Another consequence will be this ; he will learn, for the first time, what is meant by the reproach of the world.’—Sermons, p. 57.

Here then is the true and the only infallible Teacher, the Holy Spirit, who guides into all truth. For ever blessed be God, that he has promised such a Teacher, and given us the cheering, consoling, and delightful hope that he will instruct us.

The infinite goodness of God in vouchsafing such a teacher, will be the more clearly seen when we remember, that spiritual blindness is not merely a misfortune ; it is a fault ; it is seriously criminal. It is not owing to want of ability, for the most wise of this world are often spiritually foolish. It is not owing to want of instruction, for such as Judas had the best instruction ; but it is the perverseness of the heart, rejecting the divinely-revealed description of the infinitely glorious God, hating his holy character, and preferring, from the love of sin, its own carnal conceptions and principles. Spiritual blindness alleges, as an excuse for our sin, the fact, that we have no disposition to love God, when it is in truth the extreme aggravation of our sin. Not love him who is infinitely amiable and lovely ! how criminal the heart which is destitute of this love ! how yet more criminal he who justifies himself in sin, from the want of such love ! Yet this is

our state by nature. And towards such hostile minds, God has shewn the richest mercy; *He commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

This divine teaching is quite distinct from, and superior to, a knowledge of the doctrines and system of Christianity. Spiritual ignorance is very consistent with doctrinal knowledge. Satan has doctrinal knowledge, but he has no true apprehensions of the Divine glory, no relish for the Divine beauty. He hates that which is good, because his own works are evil. We want an internal, spiritual sense, the gift of God, to discover to us the excellence of the Divine nature.

Mr. Law puts this in a strong light when he remarks : ‘ The empty letter-learned knowledge which the natural man can as easily have of the sacred scriptures and religious matters, as of any other books or human affairs, being taken for divine knowledge, has spread such darkness and delusion all over Christendom, as may be reckoned no less than a general apostacy from the gospel state of divine illumination. The best ability of the natural man can go no farther than talk, and notions and opinions about scripture words and facts : on these he may be a great critic, an acute logician, a powerful orator, and know every thing of the scripture except the spirit and the truth.’ A man is not therefore the better able to receive and comprehend the great essential truths of Christianity in their real influence, because he is a great critic, or a great scholar. No illiterate man has farther wandered from the truth than have some great scholars. Divine illumination gives us to know truth in its holy influence, and in its real experience and enjoyment.

Witsius happily distinguishes the acquisitions of human intellect, and those arising from divine teaching : showing the infinite superiority of the latter, he says, ‘ One who is a scholar of this heavenly academy, not only knows and believes, but has a sensible perception of what is remission of sins, and the privilege of adoption, and familiar communion with God, and the grace of the Spirit inhabiting the breast, and the love of God poured out in the heart,

and the hidden manna, and the sweet love of Christ, and the earnest and pledge of perfect felicity.*

We depreciate not talent and genius, and human industry, and learning, and accurate, elaborate and comprehensive human knowledge. These have their office, and under divine grace they are of eminent and extensive use in the fulfilment of that office; but let them not usurp a prerogative which is not theirs, that of obtaining for, or communicating to the soul, the spiritual judgment and experience by which we discern the things of the Spirit of God. Here, *he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.* 1 Cor. ii. 15.

It is not sufficient to object, 'the most acute reasoning has been urged in depreciation of reason; the advocate of special inspiration declaims against the presumption of human reasoning:' this may be perfectly true, and yet reason be wholly incompetent fully to discern spiritual things. Nay, let us take care lest we object to the blessed apostle, who exercised the highest powers of reasoning in

* See Witsius de vero Theologio. 'In spiritali ac celesti Academiâ institutus Theologus, non modo genuinas rerum Divinarum ideas in mente sua formare discit sed et ipsis illis rebus Divinis, inestimabili sane thesauro, donatur. Non enim tanquam mera verba et nuda commenta; non velut vana somnia, vel inania phantasmata a Spiritu doctore representantur sed tanquam solidæ et permanentes, ita loqui liceat, rerum substantiæ, in animam vere eas cognoscentem, introducuntur, omnibusque affectibus, ac toto cordis nisu recipiuntur. Non novit duntaxat, non credit solum, sed et sentit quandoque cœlestis hujus academiæ alumnus, quid sit remissio peccatorum, et privilegium adoptionis, et familiare Dei commercium, et Spiritus pectori inhabitantis gratia et amor Dei effusus in cor, et manna absconditum, et suavissimi Jesu oscula, arrhabo denique et pignus consummatæ felicitatis.'

The following remarks of Bishop Hall (quoted by Knox, Sect. I. of his Christian Philosophy) confirm and illustrate this statement. 'There is not so much need of learning as of grace to apprehend those things which concern our everlasting peace; neither is it our brain that must be set to work, but our hearts. However excellent the use of scholarship in all the sacred employments of divinity, yet in the main act, which imports salvation, skill must give place to affection. Happy is the soul that is possessed of Christ, how poor soever in all inferior endowments. Ye are wise, O ye great wits, while ye spend yourselves in curious questions and learned extravagances. Ye shall find one touch of Christ more worth to your souls than all your deep and laborious disquisitions. In vain shall ye seek for this in your books, if you miss it in your bosoms. If you know all things, and cannot say, *I know in whom I have believed*, you have but knowledge enough to know yourselves completely miserable. The deep mysteries of godliness, which to the great clerks of this world are as a book clasped and sealed up, lie open before him (the pious and devout man) fair and legible; and while those bookmen know whom they have heard of, he knows whom he has believed.'

his Epistles ; and yet asserts, *If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise.* The teaching of the Holy Spirit does not take away or weaken our reasoning powers ; it rather improves them to the utmost, but it puts them in their proper place in due subordination to higher powers, *bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.* The whole question is, what do the scriptures testify ?

Perhaps the grand defect of most theological writers is the not constantly adverting to the need of divine teaching, to make us wise unto salvation : and the great success of such spiritual and devotional treatises as have been a means of edifying the church through successive ages, has arisen from their clearly and distinctly bringing forward our dependence on Divine grace. Such books as Augustine's Confessions, and Thomas à Kempis, are eminently useful simply on this ground.

THE MODE OF DIVINE TEACHING calls for attention. There are particulars on this point which, like the winds of the heavens, are beyond human investigation (John iii. 8.) ; but there are other particulars of great practical moment for our instruction and edification.

God does not now teach by supernatural means ; as he taught the prophets and apostles, and enabled them to write the inspired volume. He does not ordinarily teach without human instrumentality, and, specially He teaches through His own word and His own Spirit. The standard or criterion of this instruction, is the inspired volume. All claim to it, contrary to, or beyond the written word, and not under the sanction and regulation of that word, is a dangerous delusion. The Saviour is the great Mediator, by whom this blessing comes.

The Father, through the mediation of Christ, communicates, by the Spirit, this divine teaching to His children. The Holy Ghost is the main agent. The Divine Spirit enables us to know the things that are freely given to us of God. 1 Cor. ii. 12. The Lord promises *the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he*

shall teach you all things. John xiv. 26. Of this St. John, speaking to Christians in general, says, *The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you.* He dispels prejudices, He preserves from dangerous error, He guides unto all necessary truth, He makes our study itself devotional, humble, and practical, He removes the averseness of the affections, and He turns the will to God. He especially reveals to the inward man the grace and glory of the Saviour. *God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.* 2 Cor. iv. 6.

Bishop Jewell in his Defence of his Apology, well observes, ‘As the scriptures were written by the Spirit of God, so must they be expounded by the same, for without the Spirit we have neither ears to hear, nor eyes to see. It is the Spirit that opens, and no man shuts: the same shuts, and no man opens. The same Spirit prepared and opened the sick woman’s heart, that she should give ear to and consider the things that were spoken by Paul; and in respect of the Spirit, the prophet Isaiah says, “They shall be all taught of God.”’

So Luther, in a letter to Spalatinus, after recommending to his notice certain parts of the writings of Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine, exhorts him always to begin his studies with serious prayer; stating, that, ‘there is really no interpreter of the divine word but its own Author.’

Divine teaching is manifested and EVIDENCED by three principal features—the discovery of our sinfulness, the leading us to rest in Christ as our only righteousness before God, and the victory over the temptations of our spiritual enemy. Our Lord dwells particularly on these operations of the Spirit. John xvi. 7—15.

A decisive evidence of divine illumination is love to the law of God, (see Psalm cxix. throughout) and obedience to the divine commands. *Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commands. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not*

in him. All religious confidence, consistent with the habitual indulgence of unholy tempers, evil words, or a sinful life, is a mere pretence, directly opposed both to the very nature of the gospel, the whole current of scripture, and the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit thus gives Christians an illumination far beyond mere head-knowledge ; the light is more clear and vivid, the enjoyment is more experimental, the sense of personal interest is far stronger, and the influence on practical obedience is far more efficacious.

It is freely allowed, that there have been those who have greatly abused this doctrine, and made it an occasion of self-complacency, contempt of others, and reproaches against them. They could not give a more striking evidence of their own want of that, in the fancied possession of which they boast. How discriminating are St. James's words on this head ; after bidding the truly wise man to *show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom* ; and after speaking of such wisdom as is *earthly, sensual, and devilish*, he thus describes that which God gives—*The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.*

The author has the more insisted on this subject from its having been much disregarded. We plead not for any supernatural apostolic inspiration ; we plead not for any who claim infallibility, whether Papist or Protestant, but we do plead against the idea that reason and learning can of themselves guide us to the full meaning of scripture. We do plead against a mere general admission, that our endeavours are fruitless without the ordinary influence of the Holy Spirit, while the tendency of the observations is to show, that reason and learning are every thing. The teaching of the Holy Spirit is of main and vital importance, and should therefore be prominently urged, and not casually admitted.

The promises of this teaching belong to ALL THE CHILDREN OF GOD. Isa. liv. 13. Acts ii. 39. They are not con-

finied to holy prophets and apostles ; they are not confined to the time of miracles and the first ages of the church ; they belong to all ages, and are a part of the new covenant, (Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.) belonging to the church from the first outpouring on the day of Pentecost, to the final consummation of all things. John xiv. 16. Wherever any one comes to Jesus Christ, and relies on him, and thus lays hold of the new covenant, there is this divine teaching. The most ungifted and unlearned, the most guilty and the most polluted, may apply for, and, if they ask in the name of Jesus, shall receive, this teaching, and be enlightened and instructed.

How delightful, then, that most encouraging declaration, *If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.* You can make out no reason why you should not go to the Saviour for this gift. All your unworthiness, your sins, your corruptions, your hard heart, your backslidings, do but show your need of this resource. Just such sinners he came to save.

Let us then cast away all pride, and renounce all self-sufficiency. Let us remember His promises. *Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way ; the meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.* Let us urge the earnest prayer, *Shew me thy way, O Lord ; teach me thy paths, lead me in thy truth, and teach me : for thou art the God of my salvation ;* and we shall ourselves be living witnesses of the fulfilment of his declaration to his church, *All thy children shall be taught of me.*

And if we are seeking and have received this divine gift, let us ever remember that *the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.* The Holy Spirit imparts His gifts, not for our self-exaltation, vain glory, or self-aggrandizement, but for the salvation of our souls, for the edification of all around us, and the general good of our fellow-creatures. Just as *God hath set the members every one of them in the body as it pleases him—that the members should*

have the same care one for another ; so the Holy Spirit divides His gifts to each individual believer, for the general good of the whole church.

If divine teaching is so necessary, PRAYER IS THE GREAT PREREQUISITE IN ALL OUR STUDIES. We need to have this urgently enforced, as we suffer the greatest loss in our everlasting concerns by reading without prayer. We read much, we pray little. The best proficients have been those who have prayed most. ‘ Dr. Doddridge used frequently to observe, that he never advanced well in human learning without prayer, and that he always made the most proficiency in his studies when he prayed with the greatest frequency and fervour.’ Lord Bacon’s acquirements were preceded by prayer (see his prayer, chap. x). Milton’s *Paradise Lost* was not written without prayer. His thoughts on planning it were these: ‘ This is not to be attained but by devout prayer to the eternal Spirit, that can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases. To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation and insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs ; till which in some measure be compassed, I refuse not to sustain this expectation.’ Dr. Johnson infers, ‘ From a promise like this, at once fervid, pious, and rational, might be expected the *Paradise Lost*.’ In addition to these examples, we have the highest authority, the infallible testimony of inspired writers. How earnest are David’s prayers for divine teaching, through the 119th Psalm. How distinctly the Apostle adds prayer to meditation, when he prays for Timothy, *Consider these things, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.*

In fact, all our knowledge of every kind should be made the subject of prayer, both as to its attainment and its application, or we have no security that it will not be perverted rather than improved, and draw the heart from God rather than draw it near to him ; be used against Him rather than for him ; and puff up with pride rather

than humble us in the deeper discovery of our ignorance. But knowledge which is preceded by prayer for its acquisition and right application, will be a real blessing to ourselves and to others ; will not deaden but promote spiritual affections.

PRAYER FOR DIVINE TEACHING.

FATHER of Lights, and God of all grace ! Thou hast promised that Thou wilt give wisdom to them that ask Thee. Feeling my own ignorance, I now ask of Thee to impart, out of the fulness of Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom, the gift of heavenly wisdom.

I live in a world full of error and full of sin ; and to whom can I look with any certainty but unto Thee, O Lord ? Enlighten my understanding, purify my affections, and guard me from error. Let not the wicked delude me, and let not the mistakes even of the righteous lead me astray. I am as fallible and liable to error as others, leave me not therefore to myself, but enable me to adhere to Thy word, and give me the abundance of thy Spirit to guide me into all truth, and make me wise unto salvation, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES IN PARTICULAR.

THE study of the scriptures is so essential a part of the work of the Christian student, that it requires distinct and primary consideration. Let us never forget in all our studies, that there is but one book of supreme, and paramount, and incalculable value—THE WORD OF GOD—A book to be constantly studied by all ranks and all classes.* This is admitted by all sound Protestants ; but it is to be feared that the admission has hardly sufficient influence on any of our minds and practice.

The best students have agreed in asserting that the Holy Scriptures claim the first attention. Melancthon in his

* The Reformers insisted much on the general reading of the Scriptures. Harding, the antagonist of Bishop Jewell, having brought various objections against this general study as unnecessary, inconvenient, unprofitable and dangerous, and if not that, still that the translations were unsound: Jewell replies, 'These deep considerations were never devised, neither by Moses, nor by Christ, nor by the Apostles, nor by any ancient Fathers; but are brought in now at last by them that have of long time deceived the world by ignorance, and yet labour by the same to deceive it still. Christ says, "He that does ill, flies the trial of the light;" and Mr. Harding's own Amphilochius says, 'It is the natural provision of them that be wilfully deceived to convey out of sight all proofs and testimonies of the truth.' So the Philistines, the better to keep the Jews in thrall and in subjection, utterly bereaved them of all manner of weapon and artillery, and left them naked; and no doubt bare them in hand, as Mr. Harding does now the people of God, that it was neither necessary nor convenient, nor profitable for them to have armour. Verily Chrysostom says, 'It is more necessary, more convenient, and more profitable for the lay people to read God's word, than for monks, priests, or any others.' Thus he writes, 'This it is, that, as it were with a pestilence, infects all things, that ye think that the reading of the Scriptures pertains only unto monks; whereas it is much more necessary for you than for them. It is more wickedness to think God's law is superfluous, than if ye should never read it, for these be words that no doubt came from the study of the devil.' Thus much therefore, we learn here by Chrysostom, that Mr. Harding's profound considerations come from the study and closet of the devil.'

brief method of studying theology, recommends as the first requisite, a familiarity with the text of the Sacred Scriptures, and in order to this, that they should be read daily both morning and evening. The testimonies of men of the greatest learning in their last moments afford strong evidence of the importance of paying chief attention to the word of God. Notice those of Selden and Salmasius. Of Selden, Lord Clarendon says, ‘He was of so stupendous a learning, that a man would have thought he had never spent an hour but in reading and writing.’ When near the end of his days, he declared to Archbishop Usher, that ‘though he had been laborious in his literary inquiries, and possessed a number of valuable manuscripts on all ancient subjects, yet he would rest the happiness of his soul on none of them except the Holy Scriptures.’ Salmasius was one of the most learned men, the monarch and the tyrant of literature. At the close of his life he acknowledged that he had too much and too earnestly engaged in literary pursuits, and greatly overlooked those objects in which true and solid happiness consists. He said, ‘Oh, I have lost a world of time ; time, that most precious thing in the world ! Had I but one year more, it should be spent in studying David’s Psalms, and Paul’s Epistles.

When COMMENCING the study of divine truth, amid all the jarring opinions of human authors, it is of inexpressible moment to begin with studying the pure word of God, and to go regularly through the whole of that word, before we prepossess our minds with human opinions :—while CONTINUING the study of divine truth, it is also of vast moment constantly to keep up the daily reading of considerable portions of the pure word of God, and so to keep scriptural truth, as it has been observed, continually revolving in the mind. It will be the only effective preservative against the taint and deterioration which the mind might otherwise receive from reading human authors :—and when CLOSING our studies, and approaching the borders of another world, O how important to *let the word of Christ*

dwell in us richly, and to become more familiar with the spirit of those blessed servants of God, with whom we hope to abide through eternity.

Professor Campbell, in his *Treatise on Systematic Theology*, has insisted much, and in the author's opinion very forcibly, on the importance of pursuing this plan, and that previous to reading any work on the evidences, any commentaries, or any doctrinal books. He says, 'Devoutly study the scriptures themselves, if you would understand their doctrine in singleness of heart. The only assistance which I would recommend, are those in which there can be no tendency to warp your judgment : It is the serious and frequent reading of the Divine Oracles, accompanied with fervent prayer ; it is the comparing of scripture with scripture ; it is the diligent study of the languages in which they are written ; it is the knowledge of those histories and antiquities to which they allude. These indeed will not tell you what you are to judge of every passage, and so much the better. God has given you judgment, and requires you to exercise it. *And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right.*' He states afterwards how much may be done on this plan with the Bible in the original languages, and a concordance.

In fact, we are entirely incompetent to determine what is God's truth, till we have diligently searched his word. We may, as it has been forcibly expressed, merely 'rise to the inheritance of the false opinions of others.' The conclusion to which President Edwards came, is the result of real experience—'I find it would be very much to my advantage to be thoroughly acquainted with the scriptures. When I am reading doctrinal books, or books of controversy, I can proceed with abundantly more confidence, and can see upon what foundation I stand.'

Our time for being enriched with divine knowledge is also very limited. Suppose a man were to be introduced into the bank, and he were told, you are to be here but half an hour, there is such a place filled with gold, and such with silver, and such with copper, and you may take away

from each as many bags as you please ; we all know that he would go to that place where the gold was. The precious gold of truth is contained in the Holy Scriptures, and our main study should be to get, and then diffuse, as much as possible of this gold. Other books may be studied as helpful to this end, or to the right fulfilling of our respective stations : but the studies of a Christian, and especially of a Christian minister, ought to be appropriate. It is a shame to any man, but especially to him, to know little of that book which is the foundation of his religion and of the highest of human hopes and joys—to be a great classic, a first-rate philosopher, a skilful physician, an experienced chemist, or geologist, and an ignorant divine, or Christian—what a just ground of reproach ! * Even a high degree of critical knowledge of the Scriptures is a poor and little thing, compared with a comprehensive view, and a practical understanding, and experience of the doctrines and privileges, and the duties of the word of God. It is especially the office of ministers *to be mighty in the Scriptures* ; and this is the only commendation of eloquence in a Christian minister which we have in the word of God.

‘ The capital error,’ says Burnet in the conclusion to the history of his own times, ‘ the capital error in men’s preparing themselves for that function, is that they study books more than themselves, and that they read Divinity more in other books than in the Scriptures.’ It is one important error in our studies ; but we need besides, and most of all, the teaching of the blessed Spirit to prepare us to be able ministers of the new covenant. 2 Cor. iii. 6.

* Perhaps objections may arise in the mind against the study of the Bible, that the book is so common, that it is of little importance to know it ; a knowledge of it will come as a matter of course ; all can read it at any time. But the commonness of a blessing is not a sign of its being of little value, else the air we breathe, the water we drink, the light we enjoy, would be little blessings. Nor will a valuable knowledge of it be attained without much patient and constant study : and is there not justly attached, from its being common and universally diffused, a special opprobrium to any remarkable ignorance of it ? Bishop Burnet complains of candidates for the ministry in his day : ‘ The easiest part of knowledge is that to which they are the greatest strangers, I mean the plainest parts of the Scriptures.’

It is the testimony of Erasmus, (in his method of studying true Divinity) ‘There is no man but may be a Divine, for which nothing is requisite, but to know what Jesus Christ has taught, and to practise it ; and all that is necessary for learning it, is to read the Gospel. Men often repent that they have spent too much time in reading the works of men : But happy is that man who is surprised by death, while he is meditating on the Holy Scriptures. Let us, then, have a mighty ardour for this divine book. Let us honour it ; let us turn it over every moment ; let us die while we are reading it ; let us be changed into it, seeing studies do form the manners of men.’

If we build then, on the authority of man, even as embodied in public creeds and confessions of the purest churches, we anchor our hopes on that which will not hold firm in the tempest. Let us rest on the unchanging word of God. No other faith is a divine faith. Admitting as the author fully does, the value, in many important respects, of creeds and confessions : yet, with the exception of presumption, and rash and hasty judgment, there is hardly a more dangerous snare than that of building our faith on mere human authority. If we dare not hold an opinion but as it is sustained by human names or classes of society, our faith is not divine faith, resting on God’s word. Our mind should be independent of every thing except the word of God, and what that word sanctions. There is immense temptation to join particular classes of men, in order to be thus bulwarked, and defended, and supported, amid the conflict of opinions in the world, but we want that which will stand in the hour of death, when we enter alone into the eternal world, and in the day of judgment when we give account singly to our great Judge : the word of God will give this decision and firmness to our minds. If when doubts and difficulties arise, and we are in suspense of judgment, we were to read a portion of the scriptures, it would most probably give light to the subject that could not be acquired from other sources. The danger of taking sentiments on trust, merely of human

authority, has always extensively prevailed : because Cyprian, or Augustine, Luther, or Cranmer in older days, or Scott, or Milner in modern times, have said so, therefore Christians repose upon it. This is giving a kind of inspired authority to men. Let not our faith be in teachers, but in God's word.

Hildersham, in an address before his Exposition of John, wisely thus discriminates as to the use of human authors — 'When scholars furnish themselves with store of other writers, besides the scriptures, and being little conversant in the scriptures, draw the scriptures to the authors whom they most affect, and not their authors to the scriptures ; their divinity proves but humanity, and their ministry speaks to the brain, but not to the conscience of the hearer. But he that digs all the treasures of his knowledge and the ground of religion out of the scriptures, and makes use of other authors, not for ostentation of himself, nor for the ground of his faith, nor for the principal ornament of his ministry, but for the better searching out of the deep wisdom of the scriptures, such an one believes what he teaches, not by a human credulity from his author, but by a divine faith from the word, and because he believes, therefore he speaks, and speaking from faith in his own heart, he speaks much more powerfully to the begetting and strengthening of faith in the hearer.'

How great then is the folly of those, who rather than take pains to study divine truth, will implicitly, and at all adventures, believe what the Society of Christians, in which they have been born or educated, have truly or falsely delivered. 'They who would not believe a proposition in statistics,' about a mere point, without investigation, 'yet,' says Boyle, 'take up the articles of faith concerning matters of great and everlasting consequence, on the authority of men as fallible as themselves, when satisfaction may be had without them from the infallible word of God.' But we must also watch against the opposite snare of presumption and self-wisdom, and form our judgment of existing systems not hastily and rashly, not

positively and harshly, as if all wisdom centered in ourselves, but modestly and patiently, kindly, slowly, and humbly, as Cranmer, Ridley, Melancthon, and even Luther did.

Nothing is infallible truth but what is revealed and declared in the divine word ; and this truth is there declared generally in a more interesting, obvious, and plain way, than in any merely human productions. We do not undervalue other books. We are very far from being disposed to say of them as the barbarian Sultan Omar said of the famous Alexandrian Library—‘ If these writings of the Greeks agree with the Koran, they are useless, and need not be preserved ; if they disagree, they are pernicious, and must be destroyed.’ Other books have their use, and are valuable in their place ; but let us first take the holy scriptures, to give us just views and impressions.

The importance of a supreme regard to the Bible, as it respects a right judgment in controverted points, is strongly shown by Chillingworth—‘ I, for my part, after a long, and, as I verily believe and hope, impartial search of the true way to eternal happiness, do profess plainly that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot, but on this rock only. I see plainly and with my own eyes that there are popes against popes, councils against councils ;* some fathers against other, the same fathers against themselves ; a consent of fathers of one age against the consent of fathers of another ; the church of one age against the

* The expressions of Gregory Nazianzen, in the fourth century, though tinged with acrimony and disappointed feeling, strongly show how councils may be abused. He says, writing to Procopius to excuse his attendance at a synod at Constantinople, ‘ To tell you plainly, I am determined to fly all conventions of Bishops ; for I never yet saw a council that ended happily. Instead of lessening, they invariably augment the mischief. The passion for victory, and the lust of power, (you will perhaps think my freedom intolerable) are not to be described in words. One present as a judge will much more readily catch the infection from others, than be able to restrain it in them. For this reason, I must conclude that the only security of one’s peace and virtue is retirement.’ Yet if all men had acted on this principle, we should have lost the truth. Paul and Barnabas preserved the purity of the church by their firmness at the first council, (Acts xv. 2.) Paul withstood Peter in another assembly, and so maintained the simplicity of the gospel. (Gal. ii. 14.)

church of another. Traditive interpretations of scripture are pretended, but there are none to be found. No tradition of scripture can derive itself from the fountain; but may be plainly proved either to have been brought in, in such an age after Christ, or that in such an age it was not. In a word there is no sufficient certainty but of scripture only, for any considerate man to build upon.' It has been observed, long since, that the conscience can never find sure footing, till it comes to the scripture. Chrysostom says, 'If any thing be spoken without scripture, the knowledge of the hearer halts.' His meaning is, that the judgment is never firm, till scripture has resolved it. St. Augustine says, 'It is of no force to tell the people, This I say, and this such an one says; it is only *Thus saith the Lord*, that strikes the stroke, and does either convince or convert the hearer's conscience. . . . I would not have you follow my authority as though you should think yourself bound to believe what I say, because I say it.' *

A similar and impressive testimony is given by our own

* As there are those who endeavour to join tradition as a necessary part of the rule of faith with the scriptures, it may be well to add one or two more quotations from the Fathers on this point. Augustine, on the 8th Psalm, says, 'God has bowed down the scriptures and suited them to the capacities of babes and sucklings.' Cyprian, in a letter to Pompey, says, 'It is easy both to displace error and discover truth, for if we advert to the head and origin of divine tradition, error will cease.' The context shows that he alludes to the Holy Scriptures. He then compares the failure of truth, to a copious and abundant conduit of water which had refreshed a whole country, ceasing to convey the fertilizing stream; in which case men will naturally go to the fountain head. Theodoret has recorded this noble declaration of Constantine before the Nicene Council, held in 325—'The Evangelical and Apostolical books, and also the Oracles of the ancient Prophets, plainly instruct us in the Divine mind; therefore, laying aside all hostile disagreement, let us take the explanation of questions from the sayings of the divine Spirit.' Gregory the great, in one of his Letters says, 'As the word of God contains in it mysteries capable of exercising the most penetrating wit, so does it also afford plain and manifest truths, fit for the nourishment of the simple and less knowing. On the surface there is milk for children, and within its secret recesses there is matter of admiration and wonder for the most delicate.' He says in another place, 'the scripture is incomparably beyond all other writing, in that it proclaims nothing but truths.'—Those who wish to see some testimonies of the Fathers on this subject, will find some in Usher's valuable work, 'An Answer to a Jesuit,' pp. 25—27, 4th Edition. In his 'Historia Dogmatica,' published by Wharton, there is a still more extended series of quotations, from authors down to 1600.

The Rev. W. Goode in his Divine Rule of Faith and Practice, has abundantly shewn the shallowness of that assumed patristic learning which has latterly deluded so many as to the necessity of human tradition to interpret God's word.

country to the excellence of the Bible, when on presenting it to our monarch at the coronation, the archbishop says to him : ‘ Our gracious king ! we present unto your majesty this book—the most valuable thing that this world affordeth. Here is wisdom. This is the royal law. These are the lively oracles of God. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this book ; that keep and do the things contained in it : for these are the words of eternal life, able to make you wise and happy in this world, nay, wise unto salvation, and so happy for evermore, through faith which is in Christ Jesus ; to whom be glory for evermore. Amen.’

All things relating to religion may be resolved into these two great questions,—Is the Bible the word of God ? What does the Bible teach ? To be able to answer the first satisfactorily is a great and important duty. The scriptures must be read, the evidences must be weighed, and light must be sought from above, that the mind may come to a clear and decided conviction. To answer the second, the scriptures also must first be diligently sought, and cavils must not be admitted ; it being proved to be the word of God, submission of mind to its ascertained truth, even where we cannot harmonize it or its different parts, is as great a duty as diligent inquiry, to ascertain what these truths are. Men of an infidel spirit have scrutinized and sifted the Bible with as little reverence as if it were a mere human classic. But, while in all other books, we have to exercise our judgment as to what is right and what is wrong, and are bound to leave the wrong : there is a vast difference in the Bible. It is God’s word, and we have by that book to correct every other impression.

All sentiments on religion that are not founded on the word of God and drawn from it, however they may pretend to bring us to a state of purity and holiness, are in reality vain. *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.* 1 Cor. iii. 20. ‘ The word of Christ,’ says Bradford, ‘ and not learned men, is the lantern to lighten our steps. Learned men are to be listened unto and fol-

lowed according to God's law. Learning, if it be not according to the light of God's word is poison, and learned men most pernicious.'

For it must not be forgotten, in estimating the importance of a supreme regard to the word of God, that the chief false and corrupt systems that have troubled the church, have arisen from neglect of this blessed book : this is evidently and eminently the case in the two grand anti-christian systems of Popery and Mahomedanism. All revivals in religion have also been connected with a marked and paramount regard to the divine word.

Jewell, showing how Popery had been overthrown in the days of the Reformation, says. 'This is the force of God's word ; this is the power of the gospel : these be the weapons by which was overthrown every fortification which is raised against the knowledge of God. This doctrine should be preached through the whole world in despite of them all.'*

We shall not want motives to a constant study of the pure word of God, if we remember that it is THE ONLY BOOK having divine authority—being a pure fountain of truth,—having a special promise of sanctifying blessings connected with its devout perusal—and alone deciding religious controversies. It is THE ONLY BOOK that we are commanded of God to read—that the whole church reads and loves—that prepares us for heaven—and that will endure for ever. In all other books, there is a human mixture, and there is therefore error ; but the Bible is the word of God, as opposed to the word of man, and is not only without error, but the source and guard of all saving truth. It is therefore that peculiar and special instrument by which the Holy Spirit works in the salvation of man. Human books and statements are only blessed as they contain, enforce, and illustrate Bible truths.

Supremely venerate the written word. It is recorded of the beloved Martyn, that 'so deep was his veneration for

* See Bishop Jewell's Letter to Scipio in Paul's History of the Council of Trent, p. 790.

the word of God, that when a suspicion arose in his mind, that any other book which he was studying was about to gain an undue influence over his affections, he instantly laid it aside ; nor would he resume it, till he had felt and realized the paramount excellence of the Divine Oracles ; he could not rest satisfied till he felt again the infinitely superior worth of the scriptures.’

Read the Bible then first, read it in the middle of other studies, read it last of all.* There ought to be no part of the Scriptures to which you have been long a stranger. The whole should be read through again and again. Let it be your daily, constant, and never-failing companion and guide. Let its truths be continually revolving in your mind. Look upward for the teaching of the Holy Spirit. No Commentator teaches as He teaches. *He giveth wisdom and that liberally, and upbraideth not.* In this book, under his teaching, you may place unreserved confidence, you will find sweet repose, holy affections, and perfect security. The Bible never shunned the strictest investigation, it ever courted the fullest light, and repaid the most devout and constant perusal. The more it is studied, and searched, and yielded to, as the regulator of the heart, and the guide of the life, the more it will be valued and made beneficial to us. But search with humility. ‘The Scriptures are impenetrable to the proud, low in appearance, sublime in operation, and veiled with mysteries.’ Desire to be made holy. It is a temptation in searching the scriptures to seek rather knowledge than holiness—to obtain skill to

* Dodwell gives the following sensible remark on the use of the Bible as a common-place book. ‘It would certainly be very becoming, and very beneficial too, for a professed divine to make the Bible his common-place book for all his other studies. It would be at once an assistance to his memory, because the necessary practice of his profession must imprint this more upon him than anything else : and it would exercise his judgment more than any other arts of common-placing, because it would fix him on a design, and by that means imprint things on his memory by their usefulness, which is the most beneficial and improving sort of memory.’ See his Letters of Advice, p. 239.—Archbishop Drummond, in his Letter on Theological study, gives similar advice—directing the friend to whom he wrote, to mark down opposite each passage [in a 4to Bible] such ‘explanations as you meet with in different authors, as you go on, which you may think worth notice. This in time will be of great service to your full knowledge of the scriptures, which in the end you will find best worth knowing of all books.’

know and teach rather than grace to obey. Who also has not felt the danger of impatience and love of novelty? They are just remarks of a Roman Catholic writer: 'The most ordinary obstacles to our progress in the study of the scriptures are curiosity and eagerness. The impatience of knowing still more, hurries us on, and the love of the truth is less the spring of our vivacity, than that of novelty. A slow and silent study of a single sentence of the scriptures, like a heavenly dew, would sink deep into our minds, and refresh them; whereas haste and precipitation, like an impetuous rain, which runs off almost as fast as it falls, leaves us as unimproved, after reading whole books, as we were before.'

It is true that there are many beautiful flowers and valuable productions on the very surface of the scriptures; but there are hidden mines of wealth, and we must not, by indolence and indifference, lose those spiritual riches which we might acquire by patient research.

There are many advantages in being well acquainted with the HEBREW SCRIPTURES. Bishop Horsley says, 'The knowledge of Hebrew is an essential accomplishment of a divine.'

Melancthon, speaking modestly of his own attainments in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, says, he prefers the little knowledge which he had attained to all the kingdoms of the world, and all their riches. He exhorts all youth diligently to pursue the study of the Hebrew. Luther in a similar manner, earnestly presses the study of the Hebrew; and says that he would not be without his little knowledge, which he had found so useful against his enemies the Papists, for infinite thousands of gold. Gerhard says, 'It is miserable to see with the eye of others, and especially for him who is appointed the eye of others.'*

It was the custom in the reformed Churches abroad to propose to the theological candidate, on his examination, to read and interpret the first chapter which presented itself, on opening the Bible, in either Testament.

* See Bishop Burgess's 'Motives to the Study of Hebrew.'

Dr. Buchanan's remarks on this subject, in his sermons preached at Cambridge before the University, are worthy of deep attention. He says, 'It may be received as an axiom, that a knowledge of Hebrew learning among the great body of the clergy is the mark of a flourishing Church ; that is, of a church which is ardent in maintaining the true faith, and in expounding the pure word of God to the people. He also observes, 'It is hardly possible to suppose that the student who has read the whole of the Old Testament in the original tongue, with the attention which such a course requires, should be a contemptible divine. For in the course of his study he will be necessarily led into various useful and important investigations of which he would otherwise never have thought. Another benefit would accrue. It will be a salutary exercise to his own heart. The assiduous study of the sacred volume for one year will, if any thing can, call his thoughts from the vain pursuits of the world, and fix them on the solemn duties of the profession on which he is about to enter. Before he has gone through the Old Testament, he will find it to be truly what the poet calls *πηγή ρεουσα πειθους*, 'a fountain pouring forth persuasions,' to seek heavenly knowledge and purity of life.

'It may be added, that to read the Old Testament in the original language is the way to understand the New. The student who has made himself acquainted with the treasures of revealed truth under the first dispensation, will not stop there, but will proceed with impatience to a still nobler theme in the inspired strains of the New Testament, which are written for the most part in the idioms of the Old. And here he will have the advantage of that rich and precious mine for the theologian, the Syriac New Testament ; for he who can read the Old Testament in Hebrew will soon be able to read the New in Syriac. I call it a rich and precious mine, for Syriac is the language which our blessed Lord himself spake in the land of Judea ; and it is probable that every parable and every speech in

the four gospels is recorded nearly in the very words which proceeded from his lips.'

He adds a remark on the means of reviving this study, which is too important to be omitted.

The power of reviving Hebrew learning in the Church, lies principally with the bishops. It is presumed that the object might be effected by the following means; by requiring that candidates for deacon's orders should be able to construe the Hebrew Pentateuch; and that those who offer themselves for priest's orders should be competent to read the whole of the Old Testament *ad aperturam libri*; and by refusing ordination to candidates coming from the universities, who should continue, after due notice, for which three years would suffice, to neglect to acquire this qualification. By this simple regulation it is probable that Hebrew literature would be restored very generally to the Church in a few years.

Many of Dr. Buchanan's remarks apply also to the GREEK SCRIPTURES. Some of the noblest heathen writings being in the Greek language, it has never been so neglected as the Hebrew has. Owing to this incidental circumstance, rather than to the vigour of scriptural piety, many can study the most important of all books in the original tongue. It is very desirable that this knowledge should be maintained and turned to the best use by a daily study of the Greek Testament.

The Septuagint and the original writings of Josephus and Philo Judæus, will familiarize the idiom of the New Testament to the student, and to the mode of life, thought, and expression common to the Jews.

The author would only add one caution, with reference to the original scriptures,—that no student should think the daily critical reading of a chapter in them will supersede the daily devout study of the translation of them in our own language. We want every day a study distinct from critical study, a prayerful, humble, self-applicatory, devotional, meditation upon the word, and our souls will assuredly suffer loss if we neglect this.

Let no man think that the diligent reading of the Holy Scriptures will leave him with slight and imperfect or uncertain knowledge. Such a study embraces the chief points of all human learning and science. In thoroughly knowing the Bible, he will know the most ancient and authentic history, the most sublime strain of poetry, the most just lessons of deep wisdom to guide his life, the most curious antiquities of nations, the most perfect book of devotions, the only infallible theology, and a sufficient sketch of all false theology ; the true origin and nature of the world in which he lives, and the only true information concerning that to which he is going ; he will have laid open to him the elements of oratory, and the purest specimens of eloquence ; the secret spring of all human actions, and the chief events that shall hereafter take place up to the final judgment of all things. One justly said, ‘ Give me a candle and a bible in a dark dungeon, and keep me there, and I will tell you all what the whole world is doing.’ What an unveiling of the true character of that world in the book of Ecclesiastes ! what a depth of practical and daily wisdom in Proverbs ! where is there grandeur of ideas comparable to the elevating sentiments which are contained in the prophets ! the whole Bible in all its parts is complete and entire ; a solution of all the most important questions that the humble and upright mind of an immortal spirit need now be desirous of having answered, and a guide to the full supply of every want in God, our reconciled Father, our satisfying portion, and our final rest.

Let no man think that once or twice reading the Scriptures will exhaust its sacred treasures, or that, because the words may be familiar, he has acquired all the meaning and knowledge which those words convey. There is always in the sacred word, when we read it in a serious and devout spirit, something new that enlightens the mind, excites holy feelings, and edifies the heart.

‘ Such is the depth of holy scripture,’ says St. Augustine, ‘ that I could draw from it every day of my life fresh

advantages, although I had already spent an age in the study of it, and that too with the greatest and uninterrupted application ; not that the things necessary to salvation are hard to come at, but because when every individual shall have drawn his faith from thence for the religious conduct of his life, there will still remain an infinite number of things concealed under mysterious veils for those to search into who would make further advances in this science. For there is such a sublimity and dignity not only in the expression, but in the things themselves, that the most subtle and sagacious student, although advanced in life, and thirsting after the knowledge of these sacred books, finds that text verified in him, which says, when a man thinks he has finished his work, he is but then beginning. The manner in which the holy scriptures are expressed is so wonderful, that it is scarce penetrable by any man, although it be at the same time intelligible to all the world. In those things that are clear and manifest, it speaks like a familiar friend, without disguise and artifice to the heart of both the learned and the ignorant ; and although some of its truths are hidden under mysterious expressions, yet it is not done in a haughty style, so as to discourage lowly minds, and hinder their approach, as the poor are fearful of approaching the rich and the great, but on the contrary it invites all the world by its simplicity, and encourages us to gather refreshment from its manifest truths, and to exercise ourselves in the search of its hidden ones, bringing with us to both, the same fund of wisdom and understanding.'

Blessed then, for ever blessed be our God, for that inestimable gift, the word of his grace ! This word, like its divine Author, the rock of ages, remains immovably fixed, unchangeably the same. The worldly man thinks he can do without it, and his building perishes. The subtle disputant thinks that he has rubbed off its rough and unsightly parts, but his subtilty passes away, and is remembered no more. The waves of error dash against it on every side, and are all in course broken at its feet. The Bible in its

majestic grandeur lifts up its towering head, only the more proved, by every assault, to be the word of Him that liveth and abideth for ever.

While the reading of the holy scriptures is thus earnestly pressed, let us not forget that without the enlightening beams of the blessed Spirit, all will be in vain : let us never read them without asking for divine teaching. How clearly our reformers saw this, and how careful they were to teach this, will be evident from the following prayer in Edward the VIth's Primer, with which we close the chapter.

PRAYER FOR THE TRUE UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S WORD,

O Lord, as thou alone art the author of the holy Scriptures, so likewise can no man, although he be never so wise, politic, and learned, understand them, except he be taught by thy holy Spirit, which alone is the schoolmaster to lead the faithful unto all truth. Vouchsafe therefore, I most humbly beseech thee, to breathe into my heart thy blessed Spirit, which may renew the senses of my mind, open my judgment, reveal unto me the true understanding of thy holy mysteries, and plant in me such a certain and infallible knowledge of thy truth, that no subtle persuasion of man's wisdom may pluck me from thy truth, but that as I have learned the true understanding of thy blessed will, so I may remain in the same continually, come life, come death, unto the glory of thy blessed name.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHARACTER OF SCRIPTURAL DIVINITY.

WHEN we look at the different sentiments prevailing among the various bodies of Christians who all profess to derive their opinions from the word of God ; and when we notice the diversity which exists even among those who belong to the same denomination, it may seem a hopeless task to state in an unexceptionable manner the character of scriptural divinity.

Yet Christians are agreed in far more sentiments, and those the main and most important truths, than at first sight might be supposed. The infidel is not so secure as he imagines in his boast on the ground of their divisions. All having any just claim to the name of Christians, however humble or deficient in talent and learning, have a fuller knowledge of the leading outlines of divine truth than Socrates or Cicero ever had, and agree in more important points than ever obtained the concurrence of men of the sublimest genius and the highest intellects in the heathen world ; and probably come nearer to each other in far more points, and those too of chief moment, than they themselves are generally aware.

Differences of opinion arise, and are aggravated and multiplied, not from the indecision or indistinctness of revealed truth, but from our indistinctness of *conception*, and the corruption of our hearts. Here indeed is the chief cause of all differences of sentiments. While men love sin, they will put darkness for light, and call good evil, and

evil good. Different sentiments entertained by men holding the same revelation, arise not therefore mainly from the obscurity of the scriptures, nor from the limited intellect of man, but mainly from the evil heart of unbelief. Instead of throwing a doubt on Christianity, they do but evidence how true its doctrines are. Look at the different opinions on the declarations and on the character of prophets and apostles coming with miracles and inspired authority, which were entertained by their hearers, while the inspired writers lived, and see how the love of sin alienated the mind from the reception of the truth.

May the Holy Spirit deliver our minds from the prejudices and errors which the corrupted nature of man thus engenders, and enable us to discern the leading characteristics of divine truth. Christian union is to love one another *for the truth's sake*. 2 John 1—3 ; 3 John 1. May we discern then those truths which, held by all real Christians, notwithstanding they are in different Christian communions, unite them together as one family in brotherly love. A clear perception of such truths would furnish a clue or guide to the student with reference to all his future studies.

The grand truth of Scripture is one from the beginning to the end. The apostle expresses it when he says—*We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world*. Here is the substance of the Bible, from the first promise of the seed of the woman bruising the head of the serpent, to the last declaration in the revelation, of his love and power. All the rays of divine truth proceed hence, all the lines centre here. Christ Jesus, the only-begotten of the Father coming into the world to save sinners from the power of sin and Satan, to save them fully, freely, and eternally ; Christ Jesus, the only light, life, hope, purifier, and joy of the whole earth ; this is the topic, the main topic of the Bible, and the uniting point of the church below, and the church above. Christ dying for sinners, this is the one thing to be first of all known. The Bible is the *word of Christ* ; *the testimony of Jesus is the*

spirit of prophecy. He is the *Alpha and Omega* ; the grand theme of Christian ministers on earth, and the burden of the song among the blessed above. To endear the name of Christ, and to exhibit the excellence of his redeeming love, seems throughout to be the grand object of historians, prophets, and apostles, through the sacred volume. The mode of speaking on this point strongly manifests its primary importance. *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.* Acts x. 43. *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.* 1 Tim. i. 15. *The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.* Luke xix. 10. *There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.* Acts iv. 12. *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* John iii. 16. Here the leading truth, the character of scriptural divinity, salvation through faith in a Redeemer, is clear and obvious. Divine truth is therefore eminently *the truth as it is in Jesus*, (Eph. iv. 21.) and bears an intimate and constant relation to him.

Hence we may observe, that when Christians were in the beginning admitted into the church, they had simply to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Saviour. *I believe that Jesus is the Son of God.* Acts viii. 37. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.* Acts xvi. 31.

This was the grand bond of union, *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.* 1 Cor. xii. 12. *We being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.* Rom. xii. 5. The want of love to the Saviour was the point which the Apostle singled out as marking those from whom he separated. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be Anathema, Maran-atha :* (1 Cor. xvi. 22.) and genuine love to him was the distinguishing character of those for whom he especially desired

the divine favour. *Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.* Eph. vi. 24.

Happy would have been the state of the church, had only this primitive simplicity of doctrine continued to be needful. But soon false doctrine crept in, heresies spread, and it became necessary, in consequence of the subtilty and artifices of those who calumniated or perverted the truth, to form creeds, confessions, and articles of faith. These have gradually enlarged, but the remedy, while it has preserved the great essentials of doctrine from age to age, has like all human remedies, failed of fully accomplishing its object, and has in some degree multiplied the divisions which it was intended to heal.

Creeds were at first very simple, as we see in the Apostles' Creed. Bishop Davenant, in his Treatise on Brotherly Communion, considers the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Two Sacraments, a sufficient ground of union and communion among all the churches of Christ. It would probably generally be thought that a more distinct and full statement of fundamental truths was requisite to Christian fellowship ; but certainly unduly to press lesser points, and to make large requirements of faith, is the way to excite and perpetuate disunion. If we would be united, we must discern and rise to those great things in which real Christians concur. Only let us remember on the one hand, that union purchased at the expense of important truth is too dearly bought, and on the other, expressed unanimity in lesser points is too dearly preserved, if preserved with the loss of brotherly love, with extended duplicity, and with a greatly contracted communion of the church.

Human systems are, after all, like every thing human, imperfect. Mr. Newton has justly observed—‘ The fault of the several systems under which, as under so many banners, the different denominations of Christians are ranged is, that there is usually something left out which ought to have been taken in, and something admitted of supposed advantage, not authorized by the scriptural

standard. A Bible Christian therefore will see much to approve in a variety of forms and parties ; the providence of God may lead or fix him in a more immediate connexion with some one of them, but his spirit and affection will not be confined within these narrow enclosures. He insensibly borrows and unites that which is excellent in each, perhaps without knowing how far he agrees with them, because he finds all in the written word.*

Let us, taking these things into consideration, endeavour to estimate the character of scriptural divinity. We will consider the subject under two heads, the leading truths of Christianity, and the mode of their statement.

With regard to LEADING TRUTHS ; there is one primary truth from which all others branch out, Christ Jesus the Saviour of sinners, to which we have already adverted.† A statement by St. Paul will confirm and illustrate this point. Speaking of the doctrines preached by ministers, he says—*Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build on this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble ; every man's work shall be made manifest ; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire ; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss ; but he himself shall be saved ; yet so as by fire.* 1 Cor. iii. 11—15.

Such then is the foundation of true doctrine, and such are the various structures which may be raised on that foundation. The holy Apostle has himself, in his own

* Newton's Works. Vol. VI. 413, 414.

† The distinct preaching of the Law in its extent as embracing every thought, word, and work, and requiring the inward feeling as well as the outward act, summed up in supreme love to God and unfeigned love to man as we love ourselves, with its Divine authority and eternal obligation, must indeed be fully insisted upon as preparing the way for the glad reception of the Gospel—the *Schoolmaster to bring us to Christ*. It is by no means intended to set aside the distinct statement of the perfections of God, the character and state of fallen man, and the method provided for his recovery, with the practical duties of repentance, faith and holiness. The full contemplation of all these distinct subjects lead in their issue to exalt Christ.

Epistles, given a beautiful example of laying the sure foundation, and erecting on it a noble superstructure of holy affections and practical obedience.

It is of main importance then in forming a judgment respecting religious truth, that we mark this point first, Is the foundation clearly laid? The first question is not whether a man be of the Syriac, Greek, or Roman church; whether he be Lutheran or Reformed, Calvinist or Arminian, Church of England or Presbyterian, Congregationalist or Wesleyan. There are points of very considerable importance for discussion as to each of these classes of Christians; but the first, the grand, the vital question, concerns the foundation. If a man be really building on the right foundation, we hesitate not to say, whatever his external denomination may be, we should view him as a brother, a *partaker of the benefit*: he is with us going to one home, we hope to dwell with him in that home for ever, and in this view, he has an undoubted claim to the Christian love which we owe to the brethren. On the other hand, if he neglects and despises, and refuses to build on the sure foundation, whatever his external denomination may be, we cannot be united, we cannot hold communion with such, with that peculiar regard which is the distinguishing feature in the intercourse of real Christians.

The Church of England most distinctly lays this *foundation*. Its second Article clearly asserts that Christ truly suffered ‘to reconcile the Father to us, and to be a sacrifice not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.’ Its eleventh expressly declares, ‘we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings.’

When we remember the solemn admonition, *though, we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed: as we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed*: When we recollect that this solemnly-

announced, this twice repeated, this divinely inspired anathema, relates to a system of doctrine which required the performance of the works of the law, in conjunction with the redemption of Christ as the ground of salvation, and was addressed to members of a church ordered and planted by the Apostles, how important it is to be especially careful that we fall not into an error from which an excellent external communion does not exempt us, and to which, alas ! human nature is particularly prone, and on which the divine wrath is so severely denounced.

If that be a vital, primary, and fundamental doctrine which most closely concerns our spiritual life here, and our daily walk with God, this is specially the case with the doctrine of Christ, *for no man cometh unto the Father but by him ; it is through him that we have access by one Spirit.*

This foundation should be laid deeply, distinctly, broadly, and prominently, as it is by the sacred writers of the New Testament. They shun not to declare constantly and plainly, the saving name of Christ. See how perspicuously the Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians attest that we are saved by grace through faith, and created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Every where that sacred and fragrant name diffuses its odour. Canticles i. 3. It is seen oftener in one of the apostolic pages, than in whole sermons of some who profess to be his ministers. All duties are shown to have their most powerful motive in his love, and their life only through his Spirit ; all blessings are treasured up in him ; he in short is *all and in all*. The main substance of divinity may be considered as preaching Christ.* In him the Father is manifested, by

* It is allowed that we may preach Christ injudiciously and unscripturally, without reference to the whole of his salvation from pollution as well as from guilt, and forcing the application of passages to him, and some harm may be thus done. It is a remark of one of the Fathers in the 5th century,—‘If ye strive with violence to draw and apply those texts to Christ which apparently pertain not to him, we shall gain nothing but this, to make all the places that are spoken of him suspected ; and so discredit the strength of other testimonies, which the Church usually gives for the refutation of the Jews.’—Isidorus Pelusiota quoted by Hales. Yet let this be taken in connexion with another observation, the dying remark of Elliott to a brother minister,—it is worthy of constant regard : ‘Brother, brother, let there be much of Christ in your

him the world is reconciled to God, through him the Spirit is communicated ; first, *the grace of our Lord Jesus*, then *the love of God*, and then *the fellowship of the Holy Spirit*.

But looking at actual facts, we fear that it must be said, that in the minds of a large proportion of professing Christians, this foundation is so far from being laid, that other and false foundations are substituted in its place. The subject, though delicate, is of such vital interest, that it is not right to shrink from an explicit statement of foundations, the insufficiency of which the day of final decision will make fully manifest. It is of immense moment to our everlasting welfare to detect and expose false foundations, lest men venturing to build thereon perish for ever.

Some build on A DEAD FAITH : a mere assent to Christian doctrines, and a bold forward profession, imagining that this is the faith commended in scripture, which ensures salvation. Men awake to their danger, feeling their ruin, and conscience convicting them of sin, and showing them that they are under the fearful penalty of the divine law, naturally look out for a remedy. It is a remedy very pleasant to the natural heart, it is an easy way to imagine that hearing, receiving, and professing a system of truths will be sufficient. But against this notion runs the whole current of the scriptures. It is to do that which Ezekiel describes as building *a wall with untempered mortar*, that shall certainly fall (Ezek. xiii. 10.) This is what our Lord warns against (Luke vi. 49), *He that heareth and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth, against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great*. This is what St. James condemns : *O vain man, faith without works is dead*, James ii. 20. If the fruits of faith are neglected and disregarded, there is no scriptural divinity.

Others build on EXCITED FEELINGS : they make the

ministry, if you would ever win souls. I dread a Christless Christianity.' Luther asserts, that 'whatsoever is prayed, taught, or acted out of Christ, is before God idolatry and sin.

movement and working of the feelings the grand criterion of truth. If they can weep with affectionate concern, if they have lively emotions of joy in religion, there is a foundation they imagine on which they can trust. But it may, after all, be selfish feeling and mere delusion. The stony-ground hearers thus received the word, but soon fell away. Simon Magus heard, wondered, believed, and was baptized. To make excited feelings the main thing is to depart from the true foundation.

OUR OWN OBEDIENCE is another rock of false confidence, on which millions have built to their everlasting ruin. No human works can stand the judgment of God. They may obtain praise from man, they may for the present quiet our own minds. But all this is a small matter, and indeed of no moment at all, as it regards an eternal sentence. Not man, nor our conscience, but the Lord shall judge. He declares *whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*. What man then dares or can presume to stand on the foundation of his own obedience? it will not sustain the building, it shakes in every part, it has already failed in the court of our own conscience, and how can it stand before God.

RELIGIOUS ACTS are another foundation on which many teach men to rest. To offer up prayers, to come to public worship, to receive the Sacrament, and to give money in charity, is with them the sum of religion, and they speak as if we were to obtain heaven by external acts of religion. We would not in the smallest degree undervalue such acts, they are plain duties, and we cannot be Christians if we voluntarily refuse to perform them: but to trust in them is to reject God's method of salvation, and to rely on a broken reed. Our best duties, so far from meriting any thing, themselves need forgiveness. The Pharisee (Luke xviii. 11.) trusted in his prayers, and in his being free from gross sins, in his fasting, and in his giving tithes, and fell short of justification, because he rested on a false foundation.

THE MERCY OF GOD, as urged by many, is a false foun-

dation. They will say, it is true that ' I am a sinner, but all are sinners, and God is merciful, and if we hope in his mercy and do our best, all will be well.' This is not the foundation laid in Zion. True, God is merciful, far beyond our largest thoughts, or else we should all have perished for ever. True, we should do our best ; but who will stand forth and say, ' I have always, in all things, done my best : ' and if we have not, what is to become of the claims of divine justice. God is holy as well as merciful : his holiness and his justice are as much against us as his mercy is for us. What shall we say, when his justice, strict, and pure, and inexorable, demands our condemnation ? It is eternity that is before us ; if we fail, we fail for ever. Let us have then a divinely revealed, a firm and not-to-be-shaken foundation.

Once more ; another false foundation is that OF OUR GOODNESS CONJOINED WITH THE MERIT OF CHRIST. This is perhaps nature's most plausible device to evade the doctrine of grace. But the scriptures clearly exclude our own works from the office of justifying in part as well as in the whole. The epistles to the Romans and Galatians are particularly express on this point. St. Paul, describing the conduct of the Jews, says to the Romans (x. 3, 4.), *They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God ; for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* Again (chap. xi. 6.) he says, *If by grace then it is no more of works : otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace : otherwise work is no more work.* And he explicitly tells the Galatians, who trusted in a ceremonial work rather than in Christ, *If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. Christ is become of no effect unto you ; whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace.* It is therefore a dangerous and fatal mistake to imagine that Christ will make up the deficiency of our works, and that through his merit they may obtain for us everlasting life. Nor are good dispositions requisite before

we may venture to trust in Christ ; nor need we any good thing to deserve his attention and regard, and give us confidence enough to apply to him. He died for the ungodly, and the most polluted are invited to return at once to him, who *came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.*

None of these methods bear the character of scriptural divinity—they bring not glory to God exclusively, they shut not out boasting from man, and they furnish not the powerful motives to love God and love man, which characterize *the truth as it is in Jesus.* Let us cease from every vain hope, and attend to the divine admonition, *Thus saith the Lord, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation ; he that believeth shall not make haste.* Isa. xxviii. 16. Be not content to dig round about this foundation, to hear of Christ, to read of Christ, and to talk of Christ ; but build on him, come to him in secret, and intrust your souls to him. The flood of divine wrath shall descend and wash round the true foundation, and whatsoever is not built upon it shall be swept away. Be assured, ‘ Christ crucified is the foundation of the sinner’s hope ; Christ on the mediatorial throne is the Lawgiver of the Redeemed ; Christ by his word and Spirit in the heart is the believer’s life ; Christ in glory is the elevating object of the saint’s expectation.’

But supposing the primary truth to be really held, it is important that other truths be held scripturally. Men may build on a good foundation with materials that will not endure a trial, and though they may be saved, yet they may suffer great loss. There are many Roman Catholics who rest their hopes on Christ, and yet multiply superstitious ceremonies, justify the celibacy of the clergy, offer prayers to saints, and pray for the dead ; all this is *wood, hay, and stubble.* There are many among Protestants, who rest on Christ, and yet add human conditions and doctrines, or enthusiasm, or vain philosophy, and carnal reasonings—all this also is but *wood, hay, and stubble.*

The Holy Scriptures furnish the approved and only just

standard by which to try all. While we abstain from judging men's motives and character, which office belongs to the infallible Judge of all the earth, (Matt. vii. 1.) we must estimate the sentiments which come before us, (1 Thess. v. 21.) and are responsible for our own opinions, and whatever we communicate to others, under the most awful sanctions. The threatenings respecting additions to or diminutions from the divine word may well make every minister and every religious writer tremble. Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

It will help us in our study of divine truth to have leading truths well established in our minds. Luther says to the students of Theology—' You who apply yourselves to sacred learning, be admonished above all things to settle in your minds what you should believe as the truths of the Christian religion, and have the articles of your faith well considered and confirmed by apposite texts of scripture ; and then, when the Devil, or heretics, his instruments, would make you doubt, then oppose to them those texts, and leave them, saying, ' I will not listen to your cavils and speculations ; for thus hath the Holy Spirit directed, who commands me to hearken and incline mine ear.' The doctrine that all our righteousness must be renounced, and our confidence placed only in Christ and his righteousness, will appear new and strange, so that many will be offended at it. So also will the doctrine that Christ himself is God, and to be worshipped as such.' Luther himself, even in his advanced years, daily studied the scriptures and their most simple truths, and says, ' when a multiplicity of business, or any other cause prevents my doing this, I sensibly feel the want of it. The word of God is given us thus to exercise and quicken our minds, which, without such a practice, contract rust, as it were, and lose their tone.'*

What then are those leading truths which may be called *the gold, silver, and precious stones* of divine truth. They are distinctly brought before us in the Catechisms pub-

* See Scott's Continuation of Milner, Vol. I. pp. 234, 235.

lished by the Reformers, and in the Harmony of the Confessions of the Protestant Churches, and they are devotionally embodied in the Liturgy of the English Church.

They may be summed up in some leading Articles, all of which we would here view, in connexion with the work of Christ. The great truths of religion, as connected with Christ, and built on him, are as follows :—

Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, our Creator, our Governor, our Preserver, our Judge, is and can be the only portion and happiness of his creatures. To know, glorify, and enjoy him is the great end of man. As a spiritual Being of infinite wisdom, power, purity, holiness, sovereignty, and love, he is eminently displayed to man, in Jesus Christ, and there we see him, our God, our Father, our portion, and our happiness.

The Divine glory, in all the rich perfections and wonderful combinations of justice and mercy, righteousness and peace, truth and compassion, united, illustrated, and harmonized in blessing sinful man—this is exhibited, and seen by us only in the face of Jesus Christ : in his person, his righteousness, his atonement, and his mediation.

The personality, Deity, and work of the Holy Spirit are also manifested and connected with the life and death, the resurrection and ascension of our Saviour.

Our Lord Christ came to establish a kingdom on earth. This kingdom *is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost* ; it is *not of this world*, but spiritual and heavenly. It was at its beginning but as a grain of mustard seed, but of *the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end* : and as this kingdom was the hope of his Church before he came, so its full and universal establishment is the hope and constant prayer of the Church now ; *Thy kingdom come*. Waiting for his second coming and our appearance with him in his glory, and the full triumph of his kingdom, is the true hope and right state of mind of the Christian.

The nature of his Dispensations towards Jews and Gentiles and the concluding all in unbelief that he may

have mercy on all, further illustrate God's wisdom and mercy in Christ.

The holy law of God in its excellence, loveliness, extent, and obligation, as the unchangeable standard of right and wrong, and binding on every human being is established in Christ Jesus : his life fulfilled it, his preaching enforced it, his death atoned for its violations : and in his mediatorial government provision is made for our obedience.

Exhortations to forsake all sin and live to God derive their vital energy and power from gospel motives.

The sinfulness and helplessness of man, with the exceeding guilt of sin, are most of all manifested in Christ. It could not be for small sins and for a partial ruin that the Son of God came from heaven.

The immense value of the immortal soul is equally exhibited by the same stupendous fact. Would Christ have lived and died for a thing of little moment ?

The entire freedom and the completeness of our salvation is all through Christ. He did not come to bring small and imperfect blessings.

All the means of grace, meditation, prayer, reading the scriptures, self-examination, and the sacraments are efficacious only through His presence, mediation, and blessing.

The all-important doctrine of our free justification before God rests upon his redemption and his righteousness ; and the sweet spirit of adoption is another main blessing received through faith in him. John i. 12.

His atonement opens the way for the return of the Holy Spirit, the very gift which, when ascended on high he received for our use, and which he now bestows upon us.

The sanctification of the sinner is therefore from Christ. He saves us *from* our sins ; there is fulness of grace in him, and He communicates his Spirit to make us holy.

As sin is in Christ seen to be the worst evil and the cause of all our misery, so is holiness from him seen to be our real and only happiness. The fallen creature can only be happy by restoration to the favour and to the image of

the Creator. Jesus Christ effects this double restoration.* In Christ the precepts, ceasing to be our task, become our privilege: the law is our charter of blessings, and the gospel the means of realizing those blessings. *I will put my law into their minds and write them in their hearts*—is a main blessing of the new covenant which Christ established.

All holy duties, such as repentance, humility, contrition, meekness, gentleness, bowels of mercies, tenderness, long-suffering, the fulfilling of our relative and social duties: all Christian graces, faith, hope, love, zeal, endurance to the end, all may be learned from Christ, and attained by his Spirit. He sits as a Refiner purifying his people.

It is to Him we trace up the very origin of his Church: which was *chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy*; and he enables His people to persevere to the end.

To him must we look for the perfection of that Church. He gives his people the victory over death—He has promised to come again in the glory of his Father—judge the quick and the dead, and establish his own holy and happy kingdom, and reign with his saints for ever—He is their Saviour in the judgment day—He sends his enemies to everlasting punishment—He admits his servants to their heavenly inheritance, and he is their joy through eternity.

So do the leading truths of Christianity rest on one foundation. The substance is, *repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—faith, hope, and love, these three—the grace of our Lord—exceeding abundant with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus.*

* The two main blessings flowing from Christ, are justification and sanctification. They can never be separated. They both come from Christ: justification by his obedience unto death, sanctification by his Spirit. Rutherford, speaking of the importance of sanctification, well remarks, 'Christ makes us most like himself in his own essential portraiture and image in sanctifying us; justification does but make us happy, which is to be like the angels only. Neither is it such a misery to lie a condemned man and under unforgiven guiltiness, as to serve sin and work the works of the devill, and therefore I think sanctification cannot be bought, it is above price. God be thanked for ever that Christ was a told down price for sanctification.'—See his Letters, p. 236.

They bear throughout the character of mercy and grace to the children of God, proceeding by the appointment of the Father, from the Saviour, through the Spirit by faith to the sinner, whose salvation is wholly of grace, from sin and unto holiness.

They bear throughout the divine displeasure against all sin, and the tremendous and never-ending ruin of the obstinate sinner : man's misery, entirely the effect of his own deliberately-chosen sin, and that sin bringing him to death and everlasting ruin ; man's salvation entirely of free and sovereign grace in Christ Jesus, and that grace making him holy here, and happy in glory for ever.

They tend throughout to reveal the invisible God to his creatures, seeing he thus, in his dealings with them, manifests his own nature, character, perfections, and glory. Hence the angels themselves desire to look into the things of the gospel ; and at the commencement of the dispensation developed its character, as bringing *glory to God in the highest, on earth, peace, good-will towards men.*

We have, in the Author's opinion, a wise and scriptural statement of these leading truths, in the Articles of the Church of England. The great body of pious dissenters concur in those Articles, as far as they relate to doctrine. They are placed in admirable order, are expressed with much clearness and precision, and with remarkable wisdom and moderation, as it regards all those points on which good men have differed. Every Christian student will find in them a clear, sound, and useful summary of divine truth, worthy of deep and serious study.

Such is the Author's view (which he allows to be brief and imperfect) of the gold, silver, and precious stones of divine doctrine, to be built on the true foundation. Need he advert to the importance of this subject to every Christian, and yet more to every Christian minister, as his influence has so much wider a range, that he does not build *wood, hay, and stubble* on a right foundation ? Let us remember that the fire of daily trial even here, and of the last judgment hereafter, must manifest every doctrine,

and if we would not build in vain, if we would not have our toil lost, if we would obtain a full reward, let us take heed that we build what will stand the test of the trial by fire.

An accurate and just view of leading truths we should have ; but let us beware of letting any system cramp us in the free use of scriptural modes of expression ; and whether as parents, teachers, or ministers, we should in a decided manner, like the Bible, our best and safest model, exhort to duty, threaten the sinner, invite the most polluted and guilty to come to Christ immediately, as they are, with all their load of sin, and give them the free promises of divine aid for their deliverance. We may be quite sure that the Bible is written on the right system, and that if our system does not admit of scriptural modes of address, it is wrong.

Never think however that the belief of doctrines, whatever they may be, is the main point aimed at, and the ultimate object of the Holy Scriptures. Doctrines are revealed for the manifestation of the divine glory, and for the practical benefit of man, that the sinner may ultimately be conformed to the divine image, and made meet for heavenly enjoyment. They are worthless as to us, if so held as to be uninfluential on the heart, and not to produce charitable, meek, holy, and self-denying tempers and dispositions, from which will infallibly flow those *fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God.*

It is not merely in its leading truths that we may see the character of scriptural divinity. Those truths are stated in such a peculiar manner as to call for distinct attention.

Divine truths are not stated abstractedly, as a mere theory to be established by argument, and proved by the moral fitness of things, or by their native beauty and excellence. We have not a statement for instance to explain the difficulties of the Trinity, or a dissertation to show

the nature of the doctrine. It is revealed only on its devotional and practical connexions. We have indeed in the Romans and in the Ephesians, much of a system of divine truth in regular order, yet all is stated with reference to experience and practice, rather than as a mere theory. It is in short a revelation of the divine will from the great Lord of all to his sinful creatures ; an authoritative declaration, rather than an argumentative proof, or a treatise to establish a human doctrine. There is a beautiful proportion given to every truth, according to its real character and use ; and we disturb the order of that proportion, when we insist too prominently or too exclusively on one favourite doctrine, to the neglect of others, and so give a partial view of the whole.

The truths of revelation in the Bible are not generally either systematically arranged, or scholastically defined. They are rather incidentally introduced, with the exception of one or two of the Epistles, according to occasion, and in the way of common discourse. We hardly know where to turn for any explicit definitions of scripture doctrine in the word of God. This actual position of divine truth in scripture (promiscuously scattered throughout, and connected only by the subject matter of discourse, rather than by any artificial arrangement) is surely one of the most beautiful proofs of the wisdom of God. It is far better adapted to the bulk of mankind than any technical exactness. It better meets the prejudices of God's people, all of whom are prone to have their favourite doctrines, and who, therefore, if they found them systematically defined in particular parts of Scripture, would probably be exclusive in their regard to those parts, and limited in their range of the whole. It suits also their establishment in the gospel. It is, as it were, a compounding of the whole matter of gospel truth into the bread of life, so that the whole nourishment is communicated. The mind gradually and insensibly imbibes the whole, and assimilates to its spirit.

Dr. Owen, whose attachment to system was not weak,

yet observes, 'Some men find fault with the Scriptures, because divine truths are not thrown together in regular order, as in our catechisms. But God puts not such value on men's accurate methods as they imagine them to deserve. Nor are they so subservient to his ends in the revelation of himself as they are apt to fancy. Yet often when they think that they have brought truths into the strictest propriety of expression and order, they lose both their power and their glory. Hence is the world filled with so many lifeless, sapless, graceless, artificial declarations of divine truth, in the schoolmen and others. We may sooner squeeze water out of a pumice stone, than one drop of spiritual nourishment out of them. But how many millions of souls have received divine benefit and consolation exactly suited to their condition by those occasional occurrences of truth which they met with in the scriptures, and which they would never have obtained by those wise artificial arrangements which some men would fancy. Truths have their efficacy and power in our minds, not only from themselves, but from their place and position in the Scriptures. They are placed in such respects towards us, and in such connection one with another, as their influence upon our minds greatly depends on. Artificial methodizing of spiritual truths may make men ready in notions, cunning and subtle in disputations : but it is the scripture itself in its own present arrangement which is able to make us wise unto salvation.'

IN THE MODE OF STATEMENT, with reference to the character of scriptural divinity, we may notice,

1. THE INCOMPARABLE SIMPLICITY OF SCRIPTURAL DIVINITY. When we read human writers, we are sometimes bewildered in the multitude of words. There is a lucid perspicuity in the Bible. Here we see divine truth clearly. The light shines bright and full. *Whatever makes manifest is light*, and the holy scriptures are like a great flood of pure light, poured forth on a dark world, and the true source of its illumination and glory. You have often sublime eloquence ; but all is the eloquence of simplicity,

the grandeur of sentiment, and not of mere words. How wonderful is the simplicity of our Lord's character and discourses ! There are no syllogisms or corollaries drawn with subtle art to perplex and puzzle the mind, but there are throughout sublime truths adapted alike to instruct and edify, exalt and purify—calculated to improve the lowest intellect and exercise the highest.

2. ITS CONSTANT REFERENCE TO ALMIGHTY GOD AS CREATING, OVERRULING AND DIRECTING ALL THINGS TO HIS OWN GLORY. It displays man in his real character as the creature, the guilty creature ; fallen, ruined, and yet spared and invited to return ; but in every part of the Bible, as throughout the visible creation, God is seated upon his throne: *the Lord reigneth*, directing, upholding, and controlling all. There is no hesitation here, but an uncompromising authority becoming the majesty of its Author. It is a proclamation from the court of Heaven ; and each one without exception, whatever his wisdom, talent, or rank, must bow down to it. Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, comes to our Lord for instruction. He pays no court to him, he tells him not what will please him, yet he gives him the most important truth. Nicodemus is stumbled, our Lord does not abate and modify his statement ; he is the supreme King, let all his creatures, as they ought, yield unreserved submission to him.

3. ITS INVARIABLE HOLINESS. The Bible is the most holy book in the world. However particular passages may have been perverted, nothing can be farther from Antinomianism as a whole. It condemns sin in every part, and most of all in the mode of our deliverance from sin. After the richest displays of sovereign grace, it goes immediately to the good works, and the holy life, which are the fruit of that grace. Nothing has any pretence to the claims of scriptural divinity, which consists with the allowed indulgence of one evil thought. How vivid the blaze of its threatenings against all iniquity ! How awful their execution in the person of the Surety, the Son of God himself ! How alarming the state of those going on in sin under the

Christian dispensation ! *He that despised Moses' law, perished without remedy ; of how much sorer punishment shall they be thought worthy !*

4. ITS INEXPRESSIBLE TENDERNESS AND AFFECTION.

No book is so full of tender feelings, of pathetic addresses, of heart-touching statements, as the Bible. It is not mere abstract truth, even in its most terse sentences ; and its history is full of exquisitely affecting incidents. See Joseph's history, read Jeremiah, witness our Lord weeping over Jerusalem, notice the account of the Prodigal Son ; mark Paul's character ; observe him at Miletus ; hear him addressing the Corinthians. Through the Bible what tender expostulations, what affectionate entreaties, what earnest invitations ! Scriptural divinity is truth, stated so as to win the heart by love. There is no self-exultation and vain display of learning in the teacher. No harsh requirements ; no crabbed and bitter opposition. The very air of Bible truth is LOVE.

5. THE SPIRIT OF DEVOTION BREATHES IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES. God walking with man, and man walking with God, is the high privilege to which it tends throughout. It begins with this holy communion in Paradise, it exemplifies it in the character of God's servants in every part, it shows the full restoration of perfect and heavenly communion in eternity. You see the most lively exhibition of the very interior of this communion in the Psalms. You have it manifested in the midst of active life. You behold it all realized in one glorious character, Jesus Christ. Fine bursts of prayer are continually breaking forth from the Apostles in their letters to the churches ; and you have the enraptured praises of the heavenly host of Revelation. No divinity is scriptural, that is not devotional.

6. THE PECULIAR DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE ARE MADE THE SPRING OF PRACTICAL OBEDIENCE. You have in the first part of several Epistles, the doctrines ; and in the last part the duties to be drawn from, and to follow such doctrines. When a precept is given, you will very generally find it connected with some one or other of the peculiar

principles of the scriptures. Thus the introduction to the decalogue is, *I am the Lord thy God, who brought &c.* The principles are evangelical and spiritual. You may observe in every part of the Bible the utmost freedom in insisting on duties, without any fear of thereby weakening doctrines which might have the appearance of an opposing view. Men are in all cases called, if they would not perish, to give up their sins and turn to God : and yet the worst sinners are offered a free pardon. Our plan is not scriptural unless we can readily act thus.

Yet TRUTH IS STATED IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS. There is an advantage in this, as it is adapted thus to the various characters of men. God gives to each of his servants their proper gift. There are varied gifts in the sacred writers ; the meek Moses, the devotional David, the eloquent Isaiah, the plaintive tender Jeremiah, the fervent Paul, the practical James, and the seraphic John, vary much in the character of their writings ; but they deliver the same truths, and the common features of Christianity are still preserved by each. There may be very different gifts, and yet all be scripturally used. There may be much diversity of statement without any departure from the analogy of faith.

And thus it is in human writers in our day. There is the practical holiness of Walker of Truro, and the evangelical glow of Hervey ; yet both according to the same analogy of faith. There is the doctrinal clearness of Perkins, and the devotion of Leighton ; and yet both built on one foundation.

It is not therefore, the mode of expression arising from the natural character of the writer, but the mode of its statement in connexion with Christ Jesus, and harmonizing with the general features of the gospel, which constitutes the character of scriptural divinity.

We conclude with a practical remark : HOW MUCH SHOULD WE STUDY THE SCRIPTURES that our mind may be embued with the train of thought and the very spirit of the sacred writers. Erroneous and unscriptural views arise

from leaning to our own understanding and the love of sin. Let us then read the Bible more with earnest petitions for the aid of that Holy Spirit, under whose inspiration this holy book was first written, so shall we leave beneath us the littleness of human systems, and ascend to the majesty, and see the glory, and taste the sweetness, of the Divine Word.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE STUDY OF PRACTICAL WORKS.

THE influence of practical holiness on the acquisition of religious knowledge, has already been pointed out in the second chapter of this work, and all that was there said will tend to show the importance of studying those works, the direct aim of which is to promote personal religion. The knowledge which is directly and immediately connected with our duty and our salvation, is the first thing which as Christian students, we have to learn.

The scriptures in this, as well as in every other respect, justly claim precedence, as the best book of devotions, and the most practical work that can be read. Next to the scriptures, the most heart-moving, and spiritual, and evangelical treatises that we can procure, treatises which many of the older writers furnish on such practical topics as conversion, prayer, temptation, death, the Saint's Rest, the Saviour, the Christian Armour, contemplations on the Scriptures, &c. &c. should be daily read.

To furnish his mind with knowledge is but one part of the work of the Christian student. If this be all his aim, it may qualify him to shine among men, and to dispute, and, with some advantages, contend with those around him ; but its result will only be to inflate him with pride, and disqualify him for the indispensable exercise of humility and love.

To affect the heart aright, is the more important part of study, and for this end, after prayer for the Holy Spirit and

study of the Divine records, such books as we have mentioned must be read, and read in the spirit of seriousness, self-examination, and prayer, and thus we may be brought nearer to God.

It is the fault of many systems of divinity, and many plans of study, that they leave out this more important part. Whether it be from overvaluing knowledge, or thinking this less needful for immediate use, it is however evident, that students have not frequently had pressed on their attention, the great importance of studying practical and devotional works. The pious Ludolf has observed that 'the learned generally read authors, more out of a vain itch to fill their heads with knowledge and a party scheme, than with intent to improve their hearts in love, wisdom, humility, and meekness.'

Such studies are in truth eminently needful for our real happiness and daily usefulness. If the heart be raised to communion with God, there is the best preparation for a spiritual discernment of the nature and value of the various sentiments, which in the course of other studies are brought before the mind.

Those books are mainly useful, those studies of prime importance, which directly tend to regulate the heart, to raise the flame of inward devotion, which help us to be more spiritually-minded, more holy, and more heavenly. This course of study is most calculated to discover to us that interior truth of God's word which is often least of all revealed to those who are learned in critical disputation, and wholly engaged in verbal niceties. Indeed all the accomplishments of human learning may leave a man utterly devoid of spiritual knowledge, and under the full power of a corrupt heart.

We are ready to think that time is lost in practical studies. By no means. It is not a loss, but a gain of time to read pious and devout works. Very often we shall find even the very doctrines of the gospel more usefully, more wisely, and more soberly stated, than in direct controversial treatises on the subject; and they help us to

acquire that state of mind which is essential to the right reception of truth.

It was a remark made to the Author by a pious friend, the Rev. Legh Richmond, now gone to his reward, when I told him of this work—‘ Let me beg you to press devotion of heart—devotional works ; most students are dry and intellectual, and lose the best fruits of their studies.’

This study should therefore be intermingled with all our other studies, and our leisure time on the Sabbath should be especially consecrated to it. It is a great temptation to diligent students to appropriate part of the Sabbath to those studies in which they are especially engaged during the week. Such a temptation should be strenuously resisted, and the retired hours of the Sabbath be given to devotional works. So shall we find a blessing on all our other studies. Our Saviour has declared that *if any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God* ; it will help us to do his will, and so rightly to understand the scriptures, daily and especially on Sundays to peruse the most holy and spiritual treatises with which we can meet, such as Doddridge’s Rise and Progress, Beveridge’s Private Thoughts, Owen on Communion with God, Leighton on Peter, Adam’s Private Thoughts, Kempis’s Imitation of Christ, Serle’s Horæ Solitariae, Halyburton’s Life, and similar works.*

* Some other Books may be here added, as eminently calculated for Sunday reading :—

Hall’s Contemplations.
Bridges on the 119th Psalm.
Alleine’s Alarm
Ambrose’s Looking to Jesus.
Augustine’s Confessions.
Corbet’s Self-employment.
Guthrie’s Trial of Saving Interest.
Jenks’s Meditations.
Mason’s Christian Companion.
Rambach’s Meditations.
Shaw’s Immanuel.
Flavel’s Saint Indeed.
Serle’s Christian Remembrancer.

Stevenson’s Christ on the Cross.
Still’s Horæ Privatae.
Stukeley’s Gospel Glass.
Sibbes’ Bruised Reed.
Baxter’s Converse with God.
—— Dying Thoughts.
Owen on Psalm 130.
—— on Spiritual Mindedness.
Gurnal’s Christian Armour.
Adams’s Private Thoughts.
Pascal’s Thoughts.
Walker’s Christian.
Howe’s Blessedness of the Righteous.

But above all, eminently and emphatically THE BIBLE read with prayer, with fervent persevering prayer, is the chief Sunday book of the Christian. Let other books never displace this *the ONE BOOK*.

Baxter justly remarks, in a book which cannot be wholly approved (his *Confession of Faith*), ‘Practice is the excellent help to be truly orthodox. The practical experimental preachers and people do hold fast those truths to salvation which opinionatists and mere disputers are either wholly drawn from, or hold but speculatively, and detain in unrighteousness to their own perdition.’ He adds, ‘the godly and learned do lose that truth too often in disputations which before they held in sober practice.’

All who have deeply engaged in study have felt its tendency to draw the heart from God : so to occupy the intellect, that we forget, or think we have not time for the highest privilege of man, communion with God. What we mean is, that this, as well as any other pursuit that eagerly engages the mind, even though it be theological and scriptural in its subject, may yet lead us away from that which should be the primary object of the Christian student : the life of God in the soul of man.

Mr. Law has some severe, but very important remarks on this subject in his *Letters*. He says, ‘A scholar pitying the blindness and folly of those who live to themselves, in the cares and pleasures of this vain world, thinks himself divinely employed and to have escaped the pollutions of the world, because he is day after day, dividing, dissecting, and mending Church opinions, fixing heresies here, and schisms there, forgetting all the while, that carnal self, and natural reason have the doing of all that is done by this learned zeal, and are as busy, as in the reasoning infidel or projecting worldling.’ He afterwards asserts ‘Worldly lusts and interests, vanity, pride, envy, contention, bitterness, and ambition (the death of all that is good in the soul) have now, and always had, their chief nourishment, power, and support, from a sense of the merit and sufficiency of literary accomplishments. Humility, meekness, patience, faith, hope, contempt of the world, and heavenly affection (the very life of Jesus in the soul,) are by few persons less earnestly desired, or more hard to be

practised, than by great wits, classical critics, linguists, historians, and orators in holy orders.'

In fact, the holy life of a Christian is the brightest evidence and the fullest glory of our religion. Christianity thus embodied in the whole temper and conversation of a human being, is like the self-evident glory of the sun, sustained by the invisible hand of God, self-suspended in its course ; its own light and warmth speak its excellence, and declare its blessedness. Mr. Law well observes, 'A learned Christianity supported and governed by reason, dispute, and criticism, that is forced to appeal to canons, and councils and ancient usages to defend itself, has lost its place, stands upon a fictitious foundation, and shows that it cannot appeal to itself, to its own works, which alone are the certain infallible proofs of a true or false Christianity.'

May we then study practical books, and especially such practical books as are full of Christ and his salvation. A devout Christian will cordially concur in the sentiment of Augustine : 'I am neither pleased with those writings, nor yet with that conversation in which I find not a savour of the name of Jesus ; for he is as honey to my mouth, music to my ears, and joy to my heart.'

It is the practical experience of the Christian, it is his holy and spiritual knowledge, his pure and peaceable wisdom, which give him, when destitute of literary acquirements, such an advantage in the perception of religious truth. In this he has a vast superiority over those who may possess literature in the highest degree, but have never had the experience in their own hearts of the truths which they have acquired with the understanding only. *The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.* How beneficent is our heavenly Father in this. 'The depths of human science and learning can be explored by few, because few have either leisure or ability for learned investigations ;' but the depths of Christian doctrine and experience are by the divine Spirit revealed to those who pray and meditate,

and search the Scriptures : and experience enables them to speak with more truth and accuracy on the deceitfulness and depravity of the heart, the value of Christ, the life of the Christian, and the spiritual conflict, than any mere literature can possibly reach.

The more we enter into the spirit of practical writings, and can find joy in them, the more clear will be our evidence that our heart is right with God ; and indeed in proportion as we advance in real piety shall we cordially love such reading. And while we are thus seeking not only to know but to do the will of God we shall receive more and more of the enlightening beams of his Spirit.

CHAPTER VII.

THE STUDY OF CONTROVERSIAL WORKS.

SOME are disposed to condemn at once all controversial studies, as prejudicial and unprofitable ; but it has pleased God to turn even opposition to his truth to good, and make it instrumental to the advancement of that which it was intended to overthrow.

The opposition of Job's severe friends, and the discussions between them, furnished the church of God with that ancient book which is called by his name ; and the opposition of Judaizers in Galatia stirred up the zealous Paul to write that fervent Epistle, of which we now reap the benefit. The enmity of Pagans and Infidels have been the occasion of calling forth the most able defences of Christianity. The corruptions of Popery lead to the full statement of Protestant doctrine, and the writings of the Socinians to the clearer developement of Evangelical truth.

There is a stagnant peace full of infection and death. Vehement contention for truth may be a duty, and consistent with love and the meekness of wisdom. Peaceful minds are often apt to condemn not so much those who resist the truth, as those who by testifying the truth, are the innocent occasion of controversy, and thus first disturb the general quiet. This is not however the true peace-making spirit which our Saviour blesses, but the love of carnal ease, and the very opposite to the spirit of the gospel. Erasmus would thus have lost that Reformation, which Luther under God accomplished. There is a greater

blessing than present quiet, even the maintenance of important truth, and millions will through eternity thank God for the holy boldness, decision, and courage of Luther. Indeed eager disputes about important religious truths are far better and far more hopeful than that total indifference which arises from infidelity.

There may indeed be a disproportionate attention to controversy, as well as a despising of it: if it be pursued to the neglect or prejudice of devotional and practical religion, if it be pursued with the passions of the natural and not with the graces of the spiritual man, it is disproportionately pursued. But because there is this mistake, there is a prevalent notion among those to whom we may justly give the blessed title of *peace-makers*, that the simple statement of truth is a sufficient confutation of error. Such forget the advantage that error has against truth in its falling in with the natural principles of the heart. Exposure of error and false statement, in a controversial form, is a prominent part of the Epistles to the unsettled churches. The duty of controversy under many circumstances which might be stated is perfectly clear. *We must earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.*

Yet while it has pleased our Heavenly Father thus to overrule some controversies for good, it is not all controversy that has done good, nor any in this fallen world that has done unmixed good. There have been controversies with comparatively little practical benefit, and with deep injury to the spirit of those engaged in them. Mr. Howe remarks—

‘It is little considered what is the true, the proper, and the right notion of the Christian church, or the churches of Christ in general. They are hospitals, or rather one great hospital, wherein there are persons of all sorts under cure. There is none that is sound, none that is not diseased, none that has not wounds and sores about him. Now how insufferable insolence were it, that in an hospital of maimed and diseased persons, one sick or wounded man

should say, such a man's sores are so noisome to me that I am not able to endure the being neighbour to him.'—See Howe's Works, Vol. VI. 177.

Whenever evil passions have thus been displayed, on whatever side, it tends to the detriment of truth ; *the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*. Our answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us, should be given *with meekness and fear* ; meekness towards him who opposes, and fear towards God, lest we should dishonour his cause. It is truly affecting to look back at the whole history of the church, and see the differences and failings of good men. Paul and Barnabas, Acts xv. 39 ; Peter and Paul, Gal. ii. 11—13, in the days of the Apostles ; Fathers against Fathers in the early days of the church : Reformers against Reformers ; Ridley and Hooper : the martyrs in prison and the exiles abroad in Mary's reign ; in every age how Satan has sought to divide, that he might destroy the church : in every age what confirmation do we thus receive of the fallen state of man !

Painfully depressing are some controversies ; they either perplex the mind, and tend to raise doubts and unbelief ; or, if our own mind be clear and fixed, yet is it no small sorrow to see multitudes, after all that can be said, wandering in irreclaimable error ; to see some introducing ruinous errors, and bringing on themselves swift destruction, with that additional sad effect of which St. Peter speaks, *Many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of*.

Many also are misled by unscriptural sentiments, of which they never perhaps hear the sound and just refutation.

A powerful treatise taking an erroneous side of a question is read, and many are disposed to concur in it, till God graciously raises up a writer on the other side, who shows them how far the first has deviated from the truth. How often have we been reminded of that important truth, *He that is first in his own cause seemeth just, but his neighbour*

cometh and searcheth him. Prov. xviii. 17. And yet from all good writers we get scintillations of truth : in the Bible only it is unmixed.

The book of Job, already referred to, furnishes a true specimen of the nature of controversy among religious men. How much is right, and how much is wrong in all ! and God himself finally clears the matter, and humbles ALL, and glorifies himself.

In some cases, the subject itself is, in its various bearings, far above the human intellect. The Bible itself has informed us that the judgments of God are unsearchable, and his *ways past finding out* ; we need not therefore be surprised if there are mysteries and things beyond our utmost reach of mind.

The very obscurity and darkness of divine mysteries is not without instruction. Dr. Owen observes, ‘ what we call darkness in divine subjects is nothing else than their celestial glory and splendour striking on the weak ball of our eyes, the rays of which we are not able in this life to bear. It is owing to the nature of the doctrines themselves, and their exceeding splendour, that there are some things hard to be conceived and interpreted, and which surpass our capacity and comprehension.’ See his Works, vol. ix. 326, 327. How calculated is this to give us just views of our own darkness, ignorance, and insufficiency ! The wisest man thought himself *but a little child*, who knew *not how to go out or come in* (1 Kings iii. 7) ; and the expression of his humility was especially honoured and commended of God.

The circumstances of our situation will very much point out the line of our duty as to the study of particular controversies. If placed among, and in contact with INFIDELS and Deists, we ought to be acquainted with the just answers to their cavils, and for this purpose must study the evidences.

But here let us bear in mind that Christianity is its own witness. Let our Religion have at least the strong corroborating testimony of pure affections and holy tempers

and heavenly conduct in the life ; and this testimony, though silent, shall speak more irresistibly than many arguments. Let Christianity be exhibited in that rich combination of blessings which its doctrines make known to us ; and not merely in eloquence of words, or in the chilling and didactic statement, which may display our talent, may interest the intellect, may even convince the understanding, and still leave the mind unimpressed. One of the main pillars of evidence for the gospel is, the influence of its doctrines on the lives of its professors and advocates. The cause is much weakened when the defenders of the faith do not present to their opponents, in their lives the power and holiness of the faith. It is not always that the dignified advocate and the humble disciple combine. Has it not sometimes occurred, that the infidel is confuted by the nominal Christian, himself without that genuine *faith which worketh by love* ?

It is most important that Christians should be intelligent on the grounds of their own faith. Some are so satisfied with the grounds and strength of their convictions, as to deem any extensive attention to the subject a misapplication of time and interest. But on a subject so extensive in itself, and so momentously connected with our present happiness and our eternal prospects, it may be questioned whether the best informed among us have not need of farther information and consideration. At a time when new objections are continually forged, or at least old objections presented in a new and specious form, it becomes every one to remember the old reproach, *Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.* (1 Kings xx. 11.) It is probable, that many who are confident in the sincerity of their assurance have never been exposed to some of those assaults of the wicked one, which, by their daring impiety, have sometimes ruffled the calm even of well-established Christians. The habit of dependence upon the Spirit for the increase and preservation of our faith, must ever be combined with a diligent improvement of all means conducive to these most important ends.

The fruitfulness of this study depends evidently upon the readiness and simplicity of our spirit in making a practical and immediate application of the facts, whose credibility is thus established to our own minds. What, for instance, is the natural result of a sincere inquiry and insight into the state of the world, brought before his view by the Christian system, and the marks of the fall that everywhere are visible? Humiliation, anxiety of spirit, earnest desire for forgiveness and renovation of heart, &c. Treatises on evidences, if they were generally directed to practical inquiry, would be far more interesting, useful, and satisfactory.

The use also of this spirit is equally obvious in the offensive as in the defensive war with the infidel. Direct arguments against his heart and conscience, grounded of course on credible testimony, would be irresistible. *There*, and not in the intellect, is the disease. Convince him of sin, there is an end of his infidelity, root and branch. There is more accuracy and depth in two verses of our Lord (John iii. 19, 20.) as developing the root of the evil, than in whole volumes that have been coldly written with satisfactory speculative evidence of the truth.*

Again, if I be placed in immediate contact with ROMAN CATHOLICS, I ought to study that controversy. They have many subtle arguments to plead, such as universality, antiquity, and unity. To expose their sophistry, and satisfy inquiring minds, requires information, and calls for reading.

Popery is indeed the more dangerous, as it is the "*mystery of iniquity*," "*the deceitfulness of unrighteousness*;" and from the intoxicating nature of its doctrines. (Rev. xvii. 2.) It holds much of the truth, and yet undermines or neutralizes every truth which it holds. It unites the most opposite materials, and confederates with infidelity itself *against the Lord, and against his Christ*. It adapts itself to all ages and all intellects, and all circumstances,

* Fuller, in his 'Gospel its own witness,' has pursued this train of argument, and made the infidel feel the point of the two-edged sword.

and has, as its chief ally, the fallen heart of every human being. Those under its influence should be objects, not of false liberality, but of our tenderest compassion ; of our most fervent prayers, and of our unwearied efforts ; that they may *come out and be separate*, and not partake either of its sins, or of its plagues.

In attacking Popery, we mistake if we merely speak against its cruelties, its tyranny, and its despotism ; multitudes will join us here who care nothing for the great truths of Christianity. But all the real good that is done, is to be done by dwelling on the great truths of the gospel, especially free justification, and by exposing Popery in its false doctrine, its enormous errors, its setting aside Christ and his salvation, and its ruining the soul. Thus Luther and the Reformers shook the very foundations of the modern Babylon. The confessors of the true faith triumph *by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony*.

Protestants in general may bear in mind, that a thorough acquaintance with history on the one hand, and the word of prophecy on the other, are great helps to preserve men from this evil ; and the Protestant minister will generally find, that if his people are well instructed in the principles of their faith, and from pastoral intercourse with him, really love their pastor, that they are not in much danger of being seduced into this destructive heresy.

Popery has become more important from the great exertion of the Romanists in the last few years. While its political power has been wasting in all the kingdoms of Europe, its spiritual energy has revived to a fearful extent. Ranke's History of the Popes has opened out one cause of this in the decay and divisions of Protestants ; and the word of prophecy in the successive testimonies of the Angels of the Reformation, (in Rev. xiv.) and in the Vials (xvi.) might have led us to expect this decay. Before its final fall we may also expect that its spiritual energy, as the false prophet, the name given to it in the latter chapters of Revelation, will be yet more fully manifested. Its success over some who have recently joined it from the

Church of England, manifests its seductive influence over weak and imaginative minds. Mr. Sibthorp's answer to the enquiry, 'Why have you become a Catholic?' may shew this. He brings the Jewish dispensation as a type of the Christian, verified in Popery. He would have been much nearer the truth, if he had brought the worshipping of the golden calf, made by Aaron, as a type of their idolatry. It is painful to see, on what weak grounds so amiable, and once so useful a Preacher has apostatized. The revival of the controversy will we doubt not lead to the revival of the great principles of the Reformation, and our faith will no longer be a mere hereditary approval of Protestantism, but a personal, living, well established and heartfelt experience of the inestimable truths then restored and imparted in fresh life and power, to the Church of Christ.

If called to actual controversy, let us not engage in it without study or prayer. Let us read on the subject, and become well acquainted with it before we enter into any discussion, and let us not suffer ourselves to be led away from the word of God, and its paramount authority, and its vital doctrines.

But let us contend in the spirit of love, sympathy, and kindness; or we shall only provoke and harden. With regard to them, and indeed to all others, our work as Christians is calmly and charitably, meekly and in the fear of God, wisely and firmly, patiently and constantly, to bear witness to the truth. The work of conversion is the Lord's; but he gives his grace with the testimony to the truth. Here, again, the experience of the truth and of its real blessedness will give its defenders the main advantage.

Or I may be situated among SOCINIANS, who are actively disseminating tenets derogatory to the divine glory of the Redeemer. There is much that flatters human wisdom in their system, and some Socinians have made considerable acquirements in criticism.

It is necessary to be able in such a case, to show that they do totally fail of establishing their principles, on all

just interpretations of Scripture, just views of the divine attributes and of the moral wants of man ; and we need not add, what valuable helps there are in books, to enable us to manifest all this.

It is to be feared, however, that the doctrine of the Trinity has suffered from its defenders as well as from its adversaries. The moment we attempt to clear up a difficulty which the scriptures have not cleared, that moment we abandon our only safe guide, and plunge into the darkness of error. Most persons, we think, will have found fewer difficulties in the scriptural statements on this subject, though they attempt not to explain the mystery, than in any human writings. Yet the adversaries of the doctrine compelled the church to the adoption of such a statement as the Athanasian Creed, to protect Christians from the sophistries of subtle and artful objectors. Humble and simple minds have found few difficulties in the reception of the Trinity. They take the practical and experimental view of the subject, which is far more clear and satisfactory than the scholastic, systematic, speculative view of many orthodox statements, such as those of Waterland and others. It is never stated as a mere speculative dogma, however important, but in connexion with our own privileges and duties, as the objects of our faith and worship, (Matt. xxviii. 19.) as the source of all spiritual blessings, (2 Cor. xiii. 14. Rev. i. 4, 5.) as bearing their respective parts in the divine economy in every act of approach to God. Eph. ii. 18. We would not decry learned attempts to set forth the doctrine ; yet the clearest scholastic exhibition is far inferior in distinctness to the simple experimental view which is developed in the believer's spiritual apprehension of the gospel. We would not despise the light of a candle, though obscured with comparative dimness ; but we would rather go to the sun for light, and we should justly expect to find not only a wide difference in the clearness of our views, but also in the vivifying effect resulting from them. (See Owen on Communion with God.)

Again, I may be surrounded with PROTESTANTS OF ANOTHER COMMUNION, who, differing from me in rites or in church government, are strenuously maintaining their own particular sentiments. If ignorant, I may be carried away by an air of novelty, and be deeply grieved, on gaining more information, at the injurious effects of precipitate steps, which I may have taken in my ignorance. If acquainted with the whole subject, I may be saved all the difficulties of changes, and maintain with consistency and steadiness, and yet with love and kindness, that view which I judge to be more correct and scriptural.

We say, with love and kindness ; for in all differences between real Christians, not only is much to be said on every side, but each side is apt to magnify the importance of its own statement. We often lose sight, in those controversies which affect the externals of religion, of the fact that the kingdom of Christ is a *spiritual kingdom*. Let this principle be firmly fixed in our minds. The contests that have done most mischief in the Church have either been about external circumstances or on speculative opinions. But external uniformity, whether in discipline or confession of doctrine, however desirable, is not the main thing in our religion, or what is most for the glory of Christ. Inward conformity of heart to the mind and will of Christ, manifested in meekness, humility, love, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, these things mark the subjects of Christ ; and external things and right doctrines are important as they promote these.

However right a man may be in his sentiments on these outward things, if his spirit and temper be habitually contrary to the mind of Christ, he is not a subject of Christ's kingdom on earth, nor making advances to his heavenly kingdom.

Differences in opinion do not make so many different religions. All that hold the Head belong to the one body. Nothing can be more clear than St. Paul's statements in Rom. xiv. to show that there are inferior points, on which real Christians may have different views of their duty, and

be led by those views to a different course of conduct, and yet both sides be living to the Lord, and ultimately die to the Lord. For ourselves, he shows that we should be fully persuaded in our own mind ; and, as it regards others, we must neither despise, nor judge, nor walk uncharitably, but follow the things which make for peace and edification, bearing the infirmities of the weak, and not seeking to please ourselves, *receiving one another, as Christ has received us, to the glory of God.* Rom. xiv. and xv. 1—7. How exquisitely beautiful is this spirit ! O that it may be more and more given to us all !

But it is an affecting consideration that the principal things which have divided Christians have been those things on which the Sacred Scriptures have said little or nothing.

The controversy known under the terms of CALVINISM and ARMINIANISM, has divided men of all denominations, and has led to some bitter and painful results. I fear almost to touch upon it ; and yet every Christian will, at one time or other, be called to the consideration of this subject ; and it may be useful to hazard a statement in which it has been thought that all good men may concur. The solution of the main difficulties in this controversy is far beyond the highest human intellect, and many on both sides have departed from the exact line of scriptural truth. I do, as an individual, prefer in the main what are called Calvinistic views ; but on whichever side we may be, we should be prejudiced, not to see that both sides, in their eager defence of their respective systems, have erred.

The statements of some eminently holy men, may place this controversy in a juster light than any private observations, and may tend to the instruction and edification of those whose sincere aim it is to seek both truth and peace.

BISHOP DAVENANT, in an excellent Treatise, ‘An Exhortation to Brotherly Love,’ says, ‘This one thing alone

belongs to the catholic and fundamental faith—That the free grace of God, in predestinating miserable men, in conversion of sinners, in setting free of men's wills ; lastly in perseverance and salvation of the elect, be so fully acknowledged, that whatsoever he does to the attaining of the state of grace or glory, or whatsoever is done by men in reference thereunto, that wholly be given to God, and granted to God's special grace and mercy. On the other side, whatsoever pertains to the corruption of men's nature, whatsoever to his obstinacy in sin, whatsoever to the viciousness and servitude of free will ; lastly, whatsoever draws miserable mortals to damnation, and tumbles them headlong into hell, that we impute all this to ourselves and our own demerits, and command it distance, to be far off from God Himself. While these things remain fixed and immoveable (as indeed they do remain), although in the doctrines built upon the foundation, they have divers manners of conceiving and forms of speaking ; yea although they follow different opinions, such errors are not so deadly, that for their sakes a deadly hatred should be hatched, or that a perpetual schism ought to be nourished between the Churches.*

On the very difficult subject, *the foreseen condemnation of the wicked*, Bishop Davenant says, ' All the Reformed Churches agree—That the act of reprobation in God, as that of election, is from eternity : that none is reprobated from eternity, which might not be reprobated without all cruelty and in justice. That no one was foredamned of God from eternity, whom he did not foresee wrapt up in the guilt of damnation. That no one shall in time be damned but through the most just merit of his own corruption and impiety. That the original and cause of all evil which drowns reprobates in perdition, is not found in God's reprobating, but in the reprobates themselves. That this eternal reprobation cannot appear to any particular person, unless out of the fruits most worthy of damnation, which he brings forth, and loves to bring forth, to the end

* See Bishop Davenant's Exhortation, pp. 27, 28.

of his life. That there is no single person which may not attain eternal life, by repenting, believing, and persevering, according to the tenor of the covenant of the gospel. That there is no such decree of God, by which reprobates should be forced and necessitated to sin and perish ; but always they perish by their own voluntary unbelief and impiety, free and not constrained.*

The remarks of ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON are full of holy instruction. The excellent Archbishop says, ' We may confidently assert, that all those things which the great Creator produces in different periods of time were perfectly known to Him, and as it were present with Him from eternity, and every thing that happens throughout the several ages of the world, proceeds in the same order, and the same precise manner, as the Eternal Mind at first intended it should. . . . And according as all these things in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath, are daily regulated and directed by the Eternal King, in the same precise manner were they from all eternity ordered and disposed by Him.'

' These things we are warranted, and safe to believe : but what perverseness, or rather madness is it to break into the sacred repositories of heaven, and pretend to accommodate those secrets of the Divine Kingdom to the measures and methods of our weak capacities. To say the truth, I acknowledge that I am astonished, and greatly at a loss when I hear learned men and professors of theology talking presumptuously about the order of the Divine Decrees, and when I read such things in their works. ' Paul considering this subject,' says Chrysostom, ' as an immense sea, was astonished at it, and viewing the vast

* St. Augustine's view of the subject evidently attributes this to the fall, and is stated in a beautiful illustration of a scripture, not immediately relative to the subject. (Psalm xxv. 10.) *Universæ autem viæ Domini misericordia et veritas. Investigabilis ergo est misericordia, quæ cujus vult miseretur, nullis præcedentibus meritis : et investigabilis, veritas, quæ quem vult obdurat, ejus quidem præcedentibus meritis, sed cum eo cujus miseretur plerumque communibus.*

Augustini Opera. x. p. 551. De dono perseverantiæ. cap. xi.

See also his Exposition of the subject at length on Rom. ix. in Epist. 105, 106.

abyss, started back, and cried out with a loud voice, *O the depth!* Nor is there much more sobriety or moderation in the many notions that are entertained, and the disputes that are commonly raised about reconciling the Divine Decrees with the liberty and free will of man.—The great difficulty is the origin of evil. . . . an abyss never to be perfectly sounded by any plummet of human understanding.’

He concludes the lecture with this direction, ‘Wherefore if you will take my advice, withdraw your minds from a curious search into this mystery, and turn them directly to a study of piety and a due reverence to the awful majesty of God. Think and speak of God and His secrets, with fear and trembling, but dispute very little about them; and if you would not undo yourselves, beware of disputing with Him; if you transgress in any thing, blame yourselves; if you do any good, or repent of evil, offer thanksgiving to God.’—See Lecture X.

Speaking on the “*disobedient stumbling at the word—whereunto they were also appointed.*” 1 Peter ii. 8. Leighton says, ‘The secret purpose of God is accomplished in His having determined to glorify His justice on impenitent sinners, as he shows His rich mercy in them that believe. Here it were easier to lead you into a deep, than to lead you forth again. I will rather stand on the shore and silently admire it, than enter into it. This is certain, that the thoughts of God are all no less just in themselves than deep and unsoundable by us. His justice is always clear, in that man’s destruction is always the fruit of his own sin: but to give causes of God’s decrees without himself, is neither agreeable with the primitive being of the nature of God, nor with the doctrine of the scriptures. This is sure, that God is not bound to give further account of those things, and we are not bound to ask it. Let those two words, as St. Augustine says, answer all. *What art thou, O man?* Rom. ix. 20. And *O the depth!* Rom. xi. 33. Our only sure way to know that our names are not in that black line, and to be persuaded that he has chosen us to be saved by

his Son, is this, to find that we have chosen him, and are built on him by faith, which is the fruit of his love that chooses us ; and that we may read in our esteem of him.'

The Hon. ROBERT BOYLE, in his Treatise on Seraphic Love ; speaking of the Calvinists and Remonstrants, has these healing remarks. ' Those that are pious of either party, are perhaps otherwise looked on by God than one another, as contending which of God's attributes should be most respected ; the one seeming to affirm irrespective degrees to magnify his goodness, and the other to deny them but to secure the credit of his justice. And even in honouring the same attribute, his goodness, these adversaries seem rivals, the one party supposing it best celebrated by believing it so irresistible, that to whomsoever it is intended, he cannot but be happy ; and the other thinking it the most extolled by being believed so universal, that it will make every man happy if he pleases. The one party electing to honour *free grace*, by assigning it as to man an unlimitedly vast extent, as the other does by ascribing it an infallibly victorious degree.'

Bishop Horsley, speaking of modern writers not distinguishing that which is peculiar to Calvinism, and that which belongs to our common Christianity, and the general faith of the reformed churches, says, ' I must say, that I have found great want of this discrimination in some late controversial writings on the side of the church, as they were meant to be against the Methodists ; the authors of which have acquired much applause, but with so little real knowledge of their subject, that, give me the principles on which these writers argue, and I will undertake to convict, I will not say Arminius only, and Archbishop Laud, but upon these principles I will undertake to convict the Fathers of the Council of Trent of Calvinism. So closely is a great part of that which is now ignorantly called Calvinism interwoven with the very rudiments of Christianity.'

It is however a grand error to maintain the doctrines of grace merely as a matter of controversy, and to obtain a

victory over an adversary. This is sure to raise all the opposition of the carnal mind. They are matters of experience ; they are exhibited in the scriptures as blessings ; they are not revealed to be disputed about, but to be received, to be testified, to be used, and to be enjoyed ; and nothing can be more inconsistent than any thing like assumption of superior understanding, harshness, or bitterness of spirit manifested by those who profess to hold these doctrines towards those who hold them not. If we are eminent for professing—*What hast thou that thou didst not receive ?* Surely pity, help, and kindness, love and sympathy are due to those whom we believe not yet to have received, but who may yet receive far higher grace than we have obtained ; if by unbelief they at present are broken off, how obvious and important the lesson—*Thou standest by faith ; be not high-minded, but fear.*

These things have ever been controverted.—After alluding to the controversies of the *Jansenists* and *Molinists*, the late Mr. Pearson says, ‘ If to these be added the names of Thomas Aquinas, Bradwardine, Baxter, Bayle, Hobbes, Bramhall, Crousaz, Placette, Leibnitz, Jurieu, Bossuet, Locke, Collins, Clarke, Butler, Jonathan Edwards, Reid, &c., men of comprehensive intellect, deep penetration, superior powers of reading, and unwearied diligence ; if men, gifted as these have been, were found unequal to the task of clearing away the difficulties, and dispelling the shades which encumber and darken the subject of human liberty and divine influence, a lesson of modesty and humility, at least, is bequeathed to those who may be tempted to resolve the questions with little distrust of their own sufficiency.’

The Author would venture to add a few remarks in favour of such a view of election as he conceives to be taken in the Seventeenth Article of his Church, an Article which he believes to be framed with peculiar Christian wisdom, and which he does most unfeignedly and cordially receive.

Personal election by no means implies the rejection of such truths as Christ's dying for all *—God's loving the world—and not wishing the death of a sinner. These are indubitable verities revealed for the unspeakable consolation of sinful creatures, and to be freely proclaimed, unfettered by any artificial systems, to the whole human race—*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.* The promises of God are to be *generally* proposed, and *ought* to be received by all.† It greatly aggravates guilt when any reject them ; if they do reject them, it is entirely their own fault ; but if they receive them, it is entirely from the grace of God. *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself ; but in me is thy help.* Here is enough general truth to unite us as fellow-christians in seeking to save, first our own souls, and then the souls of our fellow-creatures through the world. Things beyond this have little light thrown on them to gratify curiosity, and are chiefly hid in the unfathomable depth of the Divine mind, wholly inscrutable to the narrower range of human reason.

Objections to election, as in itself tending to careless living, are wholly groundless, as groundless as to suppose such objections from the very opposite view ; for no one holds that God's people are elect unto sin ; all who hold election in any way for which we would plead, hold it as the beginning and cause of holiness ; and that obedience inseparably follows ; so inseparably, that it is the very proof that we are elect : and that, were the most eminent Christian to begin wilfully to walk carelessly and negligently, or to live in allowed sin, we could not then view him as elect ; he then would have just reason to fear, after all his works, that he was *a cast-away*. (1 Cor. ix. 27 ; and Ezek. xviii.) Look at the lives of those men who have been most eminent in pleading for it ; look at the Churches

* See Milner's sentiments on the subject—Church History, Vol. II. 466, 467., and Sermon on 2 Tim. ii. 19.

† ' We must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be *generally* set forth to us in Holy Scripture,' Article xvii.

There are some valuable and digested views on the consistency between general invitation and special application, in Scott's Sermon on Election. John vi.

of Christ where it is held most distinctly, and we confidently affirm, that facts and experience will testify that such men and such churches are not behind any others in strict and holy living. Will it not be sometimes found, that their strictness of life has been as offensive as their principles of religion ? Orton, who was far from being a Calvinist, candidly admits that he had long observed that those holding such sentiments were in general more serious and active in their ministry, and those of freer principles more indolent and languid ; and that he had met with few exceptions.

The doctrine is useful in the ministry of the gospel, and in the experience of the Christian, chiefly because it altogether excludes the notion of salvation, otherwise than by the free favour of God, and tends to give us richer and fuller views of his infinite wisdom, love, and divine glory, and of the security, holiness, and happiness of his people. The explanations of texts relating to it which some give, do not really remove the objections which they suppose.— One is, that election is only of nations to external religious privileges ; but election is in the New Testament connected with consequent holiness and obedience, (Eph. i. 4. 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14, and 1 Peter i. 1, 2.) which, alas ! we have not hitherto seen in nations ; and if salvation be connected with plenitude of means of grace ; and who will deny this ? then does the supposed objection of partiality, which this explanation is intended to remove, apply as strongly to national as to personal election. Another is, that election is on account of foreseen faith and holiness ; then, as no whole nation has faith and holiness, it cannot be national election ; and as faith and holiness are allowed to be from grace, it is no removal of the objection of partiality. But the scripture phrase is of another character, and is, that we are chosen not FOR holiness, but UNTO holiness. God cannot be partial so as to be unjust, and what fallen sinner can with truth open his mouth against the Divine Justice ? but God may be, and is sovereign and free in the disposal of his favours and blessings, and what saint will not magnify supremely His grace ?

On reprobation, as the *supposed opposite* to, and deduction from predestination, we have nothing to offer but our ignorance where scripture has not made things clear. God's rejecting the wicked is in no respect materially different from their final judgment and condemnation, on account of their sins : and wherever stated, so as to impugn the divine equity, it is wholly unscriptural. We speak of the *supposed opposite* to predestination or deduction from it ; it is in reality merely supposed, though both the opposition and the deduction seem unavoidable upon logical principles : but the most logical inference, unsupported by plain scripture, can never be received as an article of faith. If it be true, it must rest upon revelation, not upon logic. And surely upon consideration, most persons will allow that reprobation in its offensive meaning, as the opposite of predestination, rests more upon logical deduction than scripture revelation.

The real opposite to *elect* in the Scripture is not *reprobate*, but *the world, the rest*. The term reprobate is not used with reference to the final condition of men in eternity, but with reference to disapprobation either of God or man in time ; so that a sinner may by his open wickedness be manifestly reprobate in the scriptural meaning of the word, and yet afterwards by his conversion to God be manifested to be one of His children.

There is in the passage where the Apostle speaks on this deep mystery, a remarkable difference in the mode of his expression as to those who are rejected and those who are saved ; one is the enduring *with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted (or made up) to destruction*, where the whole fault or cause of ruin rests manifestly on the rejected ; the other, as to *vessels of mercy which HE had afore prepared unto glory*, does also most clearly and manifestly ascribe all their salvation to His boundless grace.* Here is quite enough truth to satisfy the mind, till the light of

* This view is confirmed by Bengelius, Chrysostom, Doddridge, Bishop Jebb, &c. Calvin admits that the Apostle softens the asperity of the other clause by a different phraseology, though he denies the conclusion that we would draw. Book iii. ch. 23.

glory unveil every mystery. But there is one sentiment especially awakening, that the present delay of punishment as to the wicked, is only in the result *to show his wrath and make his power known*. O let us then without delay *flee from the wrath to come*. Have we not been disputing about doctrines till we have almost lost the plain and holy lessons which the words first obviously teach? If these were matters of reason, we might perhaps expect to attain to a full comprehension of them in all their relative connexions and seeming contrarieties. But are they not matters of faith belonging to the character of God? Where would be the room for faith, if there was that perfect comprehension that would explain every difficulty, and harmonise to the eye of man every apparent contradiction? Nothing more plainly shows the imperfect view that either side have attained, than that each are pressed with inferences logically deduced, and yet which the advocates of each view are constrained to disavow. This is forcibly put (though more unction and devotion might be desired in the mode of statement) by Faber in his Sermon on the Predestinarian Controversy.*

* Mr. Simeon has, in a note to the Preface to his *Skeletons*, happily stated some common grounds in which Calvinists and Arminians may agree, in a conversation which occurred between himself and Mr. Wesley, as follows:—
 ‘A young minister about three or four years after he was ordained, had an opportunity of conversing familiarly with the great and venerable leader of the Arminians in this kingdom, and wishing to improve the occasion to the uttermost, he addressed him nearly in the following words:—‘Sir, I understand that you are called an Arminian, I have been sometimes called a Calvinist, and therefore I suppose we are to draw daggers; but before I consent to begin the combat, with your permission, I will ask you a few questions, not from impertinent curiosity, but for real instruction.’ Permission being very readily and kindly granted, the young minister proceeded to ask—‘Pray, Sir, do you feel yourself a depraved creature, so depraved that you would never have thought of turning to God, if God had not first put it into your heart?’ ‘Yes,’ says the veteran, ‘I do indeed.’ ‘And do you utterly despair of recommending yourself to God by any thing that you can do; and look for salvation solely through the blood and righteousness of Christ!’ ‘Yes, solely through Christ.’—‘But, Sir, suppose you were at first saved by Christ, are you not, somehow or other, to save yourself afterwards, by your own works?’—‘No, I must be saved by Christ from first to last.’—‘Allowing then that you were first turned by the grace of God, are you not in some way or other to help yourself by your own power.’—‘No.’—‘What then, are you to be upheld every hour and every moment by God, as much as an infant in its mother’s arms?’—‘Yes, altogether.’—‘And is all your hope in the grace and mercy of God, to preserve you unto his heavenly kingdom?’—‘Yes, I have no hope but in him.’—‘Then, Sir, with your leave, I will put up my dagger again; for this is all my Calvinism; this is my election, my justification by

All who have looked into the Calvinistic Controversy will feel that the over-refinements of Calvinism and the attempting to make every part clear and consistent, and statements beyond the Scriptures, have been some of the principal stumbling-blocks in the way of the reception of that in Calvinism which was scriptural truth. We must humble ourselves before God ; we cannot wholly account for the entrance of sin, we cannot fathom the divine mind, we cannot scrutinize, and justly reason about the mode of God's operations. We only betray our pride and folly when we attempt to do so. We are blind, and dark, and short-sighted worms, and know not a hair's breadth beyond the plain letter of scripture.*

Let every student then beware of intruding into those things which no man hath seen or can see. Oh the grievous rashness of expression and dogmatism of even holy men on these subjects ! We are perfectly ignorant of the turning-point in the controversy ; nor have any human writings, which the author has seen, solved all the difficulties of the union of those two points which Christians believe to be equally true, man's salvation in all its parts entirely of grace, the fault of man's destruction wholly in himself. The Scriptures and the Calvinists with them do say many delightful things to illustrate the former ; and the Scriptures and the Arminians with them do say many important truths to illustrate the latter : and holy men on both sides earnestly press both points ; but after all, though God will be clear when He judges, the mystery is inexplicable to us ; God has now left this difficulty that man's proud intellect might be humbled, and in its humiliation accept in a right spirit the only remedy. But God has withal implanted a conscience of right and wrong in every man's bosom, which shows him his guilt in all sin, and with a constant voice, till seared by habitual transgression,

faith, my final perseverance ; it is in substance all that I hold, and as I hold it, and therefore, if you please, instead of searching out terms and phrases to be a ground of contention between us, we will cordially unite in those things wherein we agree.'

* See Ridley's Sentiments, Richmond's Fathers, Vol. IV. 249.

forbids every iniquity, and calls him to every duty. How sad is it that difficulties should be the ground of bitter railing ; and one side abuse the other as blind guides, and the other side return the railing of fatalism, and licentiousness, and every evil. Surely love should prevent all this. For the author's part, though he thinks that the Calvinists are nearer to the truth, he verily believes that the points in difference may be so held, as to be perfectly consistent with the substantial and genuine piety of Christians who hold the view of Arminius ; and from his very heart he loves, and would ever love such pious Arminians as really love our Saviour Christ.

Making every allowance for the sentiments of others who differ from him, and every admission of the excess of the opposite views which he conscientiously could ; he would give the fullest credit for piety and sincerity to those who may come to a different conclusion, and desires to walk with them in holy love (Phil. iii. 15, 16.) But for himself he would add, he could not refuse to receive the doctrines as he has here stated them, without feeling that he had not arrived at the simplicity of entire submission of mind to the Holy Scripture, or at that full integrity of heart in which he wishes every sentiment of his mind to be moulded, according to the plain unfettered meaning of God's word. According to his present knowledge, he could not come to other conclusions, without what would be to him evasions of its meaning, and the exaltation of his own wisdom above the Divine wisdom. Others of opposite views will doubtless feel the same ; let us then *walk in love*, and seek not the exaltation of human wisdom, but to magnify Him *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom*. Let us be most anxious in every discussion to cultivate that state of mind in which we wish to be found in our last moments : we would not then be dealing angry blows towards those fellow-servants who had gone farthest from understanding their master's will. Admirable are the Christian sentiments of Bradford, addressed 'to certain men not rightly persuaded in the most true, comfort-

able, and necessary doctrine of God's holy election and predestination.' Just before his martyrdom, after praying that there may be no breach of love, nor suspicion among them, he says, ' I am persuaded of you that you fear the Lord, and therefore I love you, and have loved you in him, (my dear hearts,) though other ways you have taken it, without cause given on my part, so far as I know.—Now I am going before you to my God and your God, to my Father and your Father, to my Christ and your Christ, to my home and your home. I go before, but you shall come after, sooner or later.' * He concludes another letter—' Though in some things we agree not, yet let love bear the bell away, and let us one pray for another, and be careful one for another, for I hope we be all Christ's. As you hope yourselves to pertain to him, so think of me, and as you be his, so am I yours.†

Indeed one of the comforts of God's best servants in their last moments has been the blessed assurance of freedom from all controversy in heaven. Thus Melancthon, a short time before his death, wrote down these as reasons for being willing to die, that he should be released from the fierce contention of polemics, and learn those hidden mysteries which he could not in his life comprehend. Strigelius breathed out his soul to God in similar sentiments.†

A controversy has arisen within the Church of England originating in 1833, of a painful and serious character. It has had various names of Puseyism, Tractarianism, Semi or modified Popery, &c. It is a vain attempt to CONNECT THE MAIN PRINCIPLES OF ROMANISM WITH THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND ; by making the Church of England a medium between Protestantism and Romanism.

Its origin is thus stated by one of its advocates. Its founders were Messrs. Newman, Keble, Froude, Rose, Perceval, and others. On September 6, 1833, at Oxford, Mr. Keble appears to have drawn up the following matured

* See Bradford's Letters, p. 473.

† Ibid. p. 475.

‡ See Mel. Adam. Vita Strigelii.

account of the principles to be recognized “(1.) The only way of salvation is the partaking of the body and blood of our crucified Saviour. (2.) The mean expressly authorized by him for that purpose, is the holy sacrament of his supper. (3.) The security by him no less expressly authorized for the continuance and due application of that sacrament, is the apostolical Commission of the Bishops, and under them the Presbyters of the Church. (4.) Under the present circumstances of the Church in England, there is peculiar danger of these matters being slighted and practically disavowed, and of numbers of Christians being left or tempted to precarious and unauthorized ways of communion which must terminate often in virtual apostacy.”

The parties engaged to be on the watch to inculcate these principles and to provide books and tracts for their circulation. In pursuance of this, the Tracts for the Times were commenced and continued, till in 1841, the celebrated Tract No. 90, attempted the impracticable work of making the Articles of the Church accordant with the principles of the Council of Trent. This has tended to open men's minds to the real character of these writings. The Bishop of Oxford then interfered to stop this particular organ of their views. But, as it has been noticed, “the Tractarians have since substituted a vast battery for their withdrawn Tracts for the Times ;—the Morning Post, the Church Intelligencer, the English Churchman, and other newspapers, the Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette, the British Critic, the British Magazine, the Christian Remembrancer, the Anglo-Catholic Library, &c.,” and also a vast variety of tales chiefly published by Mr. Burns.

Some Ministers and Members of the Church of England have actually joined the Papists ; and the baneful principles of Popery have been widely diffused by means of the publications of this new division in the Establishment.

The way had been sadly prepared for it, by neglecting the doctrine of righteousness, and exclusively regarding

that of grace ; by latitudinarian principles, and by bitter political Dissent. Hatred of the holy and humbling truths of the gospel, and the re-action of infidel principles, and an unholy spirit, have helped also to lead men into the serious errors of Tractarianism. The effect has been a revival of those principles of the Apostacy, to preserve us from which our martyred Reformers died at the stake. It is most painful to see to what an extent of evil the few false principles of 1833 have spread. Our sainted Reformers and Martyrs have been evil spoken of, and there is hardly a peculiarity of Popery which has not been justified or excused. A similar defection from the gospel by the Nonjurors at the beginning of the eighteenth century, arose without however proceeding to this length.

Through the goodness of God a great proportion of the Bishops of our Church have generally discountenanced this dangerous corruption of the Truth.

The charges of the Bishops of Chester, Calcutta, Winchester, and Ossory, have distinctly exposed the false doctrine of these writers.

The works of Bishop M'Ilvaine on Justification, of Mr. Faber on Justification and on Regeneration, and of W. Goode on the Divine Rule of Faith and Practice, and his 'Case as it is,' and the Charges of Archdeacon Browne, will be permanently useful.

Mr. Taylor in his 'Ancient Christianity,' has shown the total insufficiency of the Fathers to furnish any consistent divine rule of faith. The Christian Church will not and ought not to cast aside those writers through whose exertions, notwithstanding their errors and infirmities, Christianity maintained its ground in past ages : but this able writer has showed how very incompetent any one of the Nicene Fathers is to be an unexceptionable advocate of the purity of the great truths of the Gospel.

Some of the heads of our church have taken a middle course of praise and blame. It does not appear to the Author, that in a question so vitally affecting the way of salvation, this is a wise path. St. Paul took no middle

course with the Galatians. He did not omit all discussion of the turning point of the whole question.

It is not to be denied that there has been much learning, and valuable research, on the side of the Tractarians. They have published useful translations of the Fathers. Palmer's Treatise on the Church, though sadly leavened with an unscriptural spirit in despising other churches, and with false principles, (as may be abundantly seen in the notice of it in the Essays on the Church, 1840), and indistinct in almost all its statements as to the meaning intended by the word church, has yet much research and learning. Some false principles have also been exposed in professing Christians.

But generally there is a partiality in quotation, and an ignorance or neglect of the very writers quoted in their favour. This has been sufficiently shown by Mr. Goode, in his Divine Rule of Faith and Practice. He takes from these strong men their armour, and turns their artillery against themselves, showing how the very authorities on which they have leaned condemn their own views. This could hardly have been imagined, were we not aware how much partiality for our own opinions may blind the mind and render us incompetent teachers of others. Some think because of the good brought out by them, we should not condemn these writers ; but let us take special heed, that in attempting to obtain the good, we do not lose a real abhorrence of the falsehood mingled with it. It is no easy thing to separate the precious from the vile, and the young and unexperienced are in peculiar danger of choosing the error, and neglecting that which is truth mingled with it.

It is needless to enter much into the controversy : all who are armed with Protestant armour against Popery, are effectually armed against Tractarianism. Archbishop Cranmer's book on the sacrament, answers the limited and partial notion of the sacrament being the only means of partaking of the body and blood of Christ. Whoever truly believes in Christ dying for his sins, does really eat

his flesh and drink his blood ; while, on the other hand, a man may never miss a sacrament, and yet, if he have no faith, he will never partake of that body and that blood. Bishop Jewell's Apology, and his defence of it against the Jesuit Harding, is an effectual answer to the undue reliance on an Apostolic succession, which may land us in the Apostacy and Antichrist, if joined with false doctrine and unholy living ; while the successors of the Apostle's faith and holiness, have the true and all-important Apostolical succession.

Man has ever been prone to rely on an outward form, and the special danger of the last times is to leave man satisfied with the form of godliness, and to deny the power thereof. There is not a greater deceiveableness of unrighteousness, than this by which Satan effectually blinds and destroys the immortal souls of men. The effectual help against the temptations of this new schism, is the study of the Holy Scriptures, accompanied by the inward teaching of the Holy Ghost, discovering to us the grace of the Saviour, and giving life to our souls with the form ; leading us to real communion with Christ ; to experience of his grace and love, and the freedom and fulness of his salvation, and all holy and righteous conduct in the hope of the full recompense, in the coming day of Christ. Very striking is the testimony of an ancient writer, supposed to have been Chrysostom, as to the sufficiency of the Scriptures to guard us from heresy. " Now it is known in no way to those who wish to ascertain what is the true Church of Christ, but only through the Scriptures. Why ? because all those things which are properly Christ's in the Church, these heresies have also in their schism ; Churches alike, the divine Scriptures themselves alike, bishops alike and the other orders of the clergy, baptism alike, the Eucharist alike, and every thing else, nay even Christ himself. Therefore if any wish to ascertain which is the true Church of Christ, whence can he ascertain it, in the confusion arising from so great a similarity, but only in the Holy Scriptures ? Therefore the Lord knowing that

such a confusion of things would take place in the last days, commands on that account, that the Christians who are desirous of availing themselves of the strength of true faith, should betake themselves to nothing else but the Holy Scriptures. Otherwise, if they shall look to other things, they shall stumble and perish, not understanding which is the true Church. And through this they shall fall upon the abomination of desolation which stands in the holy places of the church." See the Homilies on Matthew in the late Paris edition of Chrysostom, vol. vi. p. 946.—and James' Corruption of the Fathers, p. 161—170. Mr. Goode gives the extract in his Divine Rule of Faith and Practice, and it is here given from his translation.

I cannot but farther observe that I believe one great reason of the prevalence of these serious errors, has been the neglect of the word of Prophecy. How very few of the defenders of the truth have taken this divinely-provided artillery for winning spiritual victories over this peculiar enemy.

Our Scripture armour against these false doctrines, is the word of prophecy, which so distinctly, and so fully sets forth the Mystery of Iniquity. It was proved at the Reformation to be the armour of light, against all the more complete and subtle delusions of Popery. Against this proved armour, no Roman weapon can prosper. Let a man be well acquainted with the prophecies of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John, and he will find in their inspired testimony, a full defence against Popery, and all its kindred seductions.

The subject of GEOLOGY, in harmony with Revelation, has latterly engaged much attention. Several valuable papers have appeared in the Christian Observer. Some of those who have appeared as the advocates of the idea, that all the phenomena of Geology are to be accounted for by the scriptural statement of the Deluge, have rashly set aside the account of the garden of Eden, in the second chapter of Genesis. Others have attempted to set aside

the universality of the Deluge. Mr. Stuart has defended on philological grounds, the *immediate* connection of the first and second verse of Genesis, but his reasoning is not convincing. The subject of Geology, is yet in too early a stage as a science to enable us to take a firm standing upon it, that we may harmonize the present conclusions of the science with Revelation. The evidences of Revelation being of God, are infinitely more firm than those of any system yet established of Geology ; but let the science be pursued to the utmost ; all God's works shall in everything bring glory to his name, and evidence and illustration to the truth and fulness of his revealed word. Candlish on Genesis has some beautiful remarks.

Having given these general hints on particular controversies, we will now add some practical directions on the subject.

If compelled to pursue controversial studies, and drawn out into controversy, WATCH AGAINST ITS MANY EVILS.

The unhappiness of controversy is, that human passions are roused by it ; and when once the matter is passed into the affections, a sound judgment is lost ; our own honour, however much the honour of God is pretended, becomes the real object of contention. We love so much our own conceits and inventions, especially when we have once publicly avowed them, and our wisdom seems committed in them, that no strength of argument shown by others will induce us to give them up. Few of the parties, once fairly engaged in a controversy, ever change their mind. We forget that the spirit of Christian love wins far more than the keenness and acuteness of polemics. But let us fear lest we bring disputations, disunions, and bitterness among fellow Christians, and ruin millions of immortal souls, by seeking ourselves, under the vain pretence of seeking God and His glory. It is well observed by Jackson,* 'To love our own wills is an impotency natural to all ; and we love them the better, at least more strongly, when we perceive them set on that which is in itself good.

* See Works, Vol. II. as quoted by Southey.

Whence it is that our desires of doing many things which are good and commendable often draw us to use means not so commendable for their accomplishment.'

We would particularly caution young Christians not to begin with controversy, and perplex themselves with deep mysteries ; such topics are much to their loss and hindrance, by diverting their minds from the grand essentials of the gospel. All habits increase by practice and exercise, and therefore another of the dangers of controversy is a love of controversy, which is usually attended with much, if not total blindness to the dangers consequent upon it.

Watch against strong and rash expressions : they often do much mischief. Hardly any good man but has, in some point, fallen into such mistakes, and then his mistakes have been used as a weapon against divine truth, perfectly contrary to the main sentiments of the writer. When contending against a particular error, men are apt to look only at that, and in guarding against it, fall into the opposite error. God has not always in one place fully expressed His truth, but in the whole scripture he guides us to just views, and guards us against every error connected with that truth. Against the self-righteous, how plain is Paul ; against the licentious, how express is James. Manton observes, 'The scripture has so poised and tempered all doctrines and expressions, that it might wisely prevent mistakes and errors on every hand, and that sentences might not be violently urged apart, but measured by the proportion of faith.'

Some become so attached to individuals, or so prejudiced against them, that they will approve or not approve the very same sentiments, just according as they are uttered by different persons. Others totally misname things, and call divine grace, Antinomianism ; or the unquestionable truth of man's moral responsibility, Pelagianism. We are all too eager for our own particular notions. One observes, 'The greatest humility becomes us in speaking of what is our own. When grievous wolves creep in, they spare not the flock, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples.

after them. I scarce ever knew an author who had a nostrum in divinity, a contrivance of his own, but he was more impatient for that, than for the great fundamentals of Christianity. He could argue against the man who denies the truth, with more temper, than against one who is afraid of his scheme.'

There is particular danger in the tendency to over-estimate and exaggerate the importance of a controverted doctrine, so as to set it above all others. 'Great,' says Davenant, 'is the unhappiness of Christians, when, by reason of the noise and over-much heat of controversies, they scarcely leave leisure to hear or think of the fundamental and saving doctrine of the scriptures, and not at all to do those deeds most necessarily required by God's commandments.'

O the misery of man ! that, through the pride of his fallen heart he is more desirous of the praise of knowledge, than of the attainments of real holiness ; and is more engaged in quarrelling with those who dispute his sentiments, than with those living in sin, or than in striving to spread love, humility and piety.

Such are some of the many dangers of controversy. We are all seeking distinction and the honour that comes from man, and here is an endless source of contention. *Only by pride cometh contention.*

Carefully AVOID A MERE WAR OF WORDS. It is St. Paul's solemn direction to Timothy, to charge his hearers *before the Lord, that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.* The history of controversies is an awful comment on this direction. How many have been subverted by the contentions of real Christians ! How many controversies have come to a mere war of words ? Werenfel's Treatise on Logomachies and Baxter's Catholic Theology afford abundant specimens of this sad effect, and this waste of Christian strength. It arises from that pride of heart which seeks its own glory, and is followed by innumerable evils. *If any man . . . consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus*

Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness : from such withdraw thyself. Erasmus, in the Preface to Hilary's Works, says, 'The doctrine of Christ, which at the first was free from strife of words began to depend on the defences of philosophy ; this was the first degree of the Church's declension to the worse.' But while there are these solemn cautions against a war of words, we must not interpret them so as to be indifferent to the form of sound words : for there is, in the very same Epistle, a direction *to hold fast the form of sound words.*

Beware of TAKING AN OPPONENT'S DESCRIPTION, OR HIS INFERENCES, AS GIVING THE JUST VIEW OF THE OPINION WHICH HE OPPOSES. We first misunderstand an opponent, and then misrepresent him, and nothing kindles more strife and enmity. What misrepresentations are there on all sides ! Bishop Hall says, (See Works, Vol. vii. 441—455.) 'Let a man believe Andrew Jurgiviscus, he will think the Protestants hold no one article of the Apostles' creed. Let him believe Campian, he shall think we hold God to be the author of sin : that the Mediator between God and man, Jesus, died the second death : that all sins are equal, and many more of the same bran. If he shall believe Cardinal Bellarmine, he shall condemn Erasmus as a patron of Arians ; Luther, as an enemy to the Holy Trinity, and to the consubstantiality of the Son of God ; Melancthon and Scheckius as favourers of the Tritheists ; Calvin, as an advocate of the Samosatensians ; Bullinger, of Arianism ; Beza, of Nestorianism. If he will believe our countryman Gifford, he shall think Calvin's doctrines in many things worse than the Koran. Ill-will never said, Well, God forbid that the same man should be in the same case accuser, witness, and judge.' Nor must we charge our opponent with the consequences which we think may be justly inferred, when he positively denies

those consequences. Bucer remarks, 'It is our part to see not what does of itself follow upon any opinion, but what follows in the conscience of those who hold that opinion, which we think contrary to a fundamental article.'

BE CAUTIOUS OF ASSERTING OPINIONS on a difficult and obscure doctrine TILL YOU HAVE READ BOTH SIDES. The most important doctrines are so clear and distinct, that like the sun they are manifest by their own light ; such as the sin and ruin of man, salvation by Christ Jesus, the divine glory of his person, and the freedom of his grace, faith in Him, adoption by his Spirit, the necessity of holiness, the judgment to come, and the certain and final condemnation of every unbeliever. To read controversies which would seek to set aside these points, is like reading an elaborate proof that two and two make five. Life is too short, and its work too important to be trifled away. But there are other points where good men have differed, and which yet are of considerable importance. Many books might have been spared ; many erroneous statements would never have appeared ; much serious division and contention might have been prevented, had persons known the whole of a controversy before they publicly avowed their sentiments. When once committed by the statement of an opinion, we shrink from the humiliation of retraction, and so error is perpetuated. We would not recommend much study of controversial works, thinking it prejudicial ; but if you read Whitby on the five points, read Dr. Gill's reply ; Dr. Crisp's sermons led to Daniel Williams' Gospel Truth ; if you read that, read also Chauncy's Neonomianism Unmasked : Neale's History of the Puritans, should be studied with Bishop Madox's Vindication ; Goodwin's Redemption, with Kendal's and Owen's Replies ; Toplady's Historic Defence, with Nicholl's Calvinism and Arminianism ; Bishop Mant on Baptismal Regeneration, with Scott's or Biddulph's Reply. From the beginning, in order that we should call no man master, it has pleased God to permit mistakes by good men, even in the most useful treatises. Anselm observes even in his day, 'In the

books of holy teachers, which the church reads as authentic, things corrupt and heretical are sometimes found, but the books and authors are not to be condemned for this.' We have seen similar defects in human writings in our day. Take, for instance, Hervey's *Theron and Aspasio*. Few books have been so useful ; yet, like every human writing, it is not free from error ; though substantially right, are not hope and assurance sometimes confounded with faith ? Bellamy writes his *Dialogues* with some asperity, but with talent and piety, to point out what he thought erroneous ; but he mistakes Hervey, and makes needless difficulties in the way of the sinner's return to God : Mr. Scott, in his *Warrant of Faith* shows this : it is a valuable tract ; but after all, with a few exceptions, the clear statements of divine truth in Hervey's *Theron and Aspasio*, and his Christian addresses, full of kindness and affection, gentleness and sweetness of Spirit, draw out your best feelings and win you over to evangelical principles. It is an advantage, however, to compare such writers and read them together. A person who reads both sides, comparing all with the scriptures, and with a heart anxious only after scriptural truth, may derive great instruction from each side. Let us endeavour to find out, and guard against our constitutional or acquired prejudices, which arise chiefly from our limited and contracted views. Ordinarily the truth is revealed but in part to any. How valuable then are the scriptures, where all is simple truth !

Beware of ARTIFICIAL SYSTEMS OF DIVINITY. That the scripture contains an harmonious system, and that there is connexion, and dependance, and proportion, of the several parts of truth is unquestionable. But to discern this system clearly in every component part, requires an eye perfectly single, without a dark spot of sin, or prejudiced reasoning of any kind. It is also unquestionable that a full and clear statement gathered from all parts of scripture is advantageous ; but implied consequences, where the scripture has not stated those consequences, and artificial plans and arrangements of truth, may deprive us of

the power and simplicity of truth, and even prejudice the minds of others against it. In this view it appears to me that many excellent writers have gone too far in their distinctions. Let us keep to scriptural terms and ideas, and not be wise above what is written. Where scripture is plain and obvious, there is a clear ground of faith. Where it is ambiguous or intricate, suspend your judgment, neither affirm nor deny, but humble yourself before God and admire His majesty. Especially, seek not by human additions to make every part clear in your own system. That system which is more exact and clear than the scriptures is so far false. The late Mr. Richardson remarked, "that he suspected every preconceived opinion which tempted him to wish, when he met with certain texts of Scripture, that they had not been there." We ought to be as fairly chargeable with inconsistency as the book of God. But we are often in study attending rather to the theory and science of theology, than to practical obedience and the holy efficacy of scriptural truth. Some of the best Puritan writers fell into this fault of a too refined or artificial divinity. Dr. Owen was, as Mr. Cecil observes, too systematic.

CULTIVATE A SPIRIT OF TENDER LOVE TOWARDS ALL FROM WHOM YOU DIFFER. Anger is soon excited in a religious controversy, and nothing is more prejudicial to its happy termination. When the Archangel Michael had to contend with Satan, he had a good cause and the worst adversary, yet his pure and holy nature would not sully itself by angry words and railing accusation. Dr. Manton observed, 'When tongue is sharpened against tongue, and pen against pen, what follows? Nothing but mutual animosities and hatred, whereby, if we gain aught of truth, we lose much of love and goodness. . . . Those engage most successfully that use the hardest arguments and the softest words; whereas railings and revilings, as they are without love, so are they without profit.' I admire the words of Augustine to the sceptics of his age. He says, 'Let those rage against you who know not with what la-

bour truth is found, and how hard it is to avoid errors ; who know not with what difficulty the eye of the interior man is healed, who know not with what groans and sighs we get to understand the very least of God.' This spirit of love is of vast importance, and even good men have failed in this respect. Bishop Davenant speaking of the controversies in Holland, says, ' I doubt not to affirm that those Doctors among the Dutch churches which are deceived, and yet are ready to retain brotherly communion with others, are held more excused from schism before God, than they who maintain the true opinion in these controversies, and in the mean time disdain to hold brotherly communion with other churches desiring the same.'*

It is a hard and, I trust, a generally unmerited censure which Orton brought against faithful clergymen ; but even a false charge may teach a true lesson. He says, ' Those who, I hope, are truly serious and concerned to do good, are frequently great bigots to the Church, and very uncharitable in their sentiments, and will secretly undermine the reputation of a dissenting minister if they can, when they find he is not as narrow and rigid as themselves.'† It was the observation of Mede, in a day when he had full opportunity for ascertaining the fact, ' A man that has once drawn blood in controversy, is seldom known ever perfectly to recover his own good temper afterwards.'

How beautiful, on the other hand, is that spirit which returns kindness for unkindness, and instead of railing gives a blessing. Thus did Augustine towards his opponents.‡ Thus did Calvin, in a letter to Bullinger, highly commending Luther, who had abused him. He says, ' I am often accustomed to say that if he should call me devil, yet I will still honour and acknowledge him as an eminent servant of God.' Calvin's Epistles, 239. Hooker and Scott also afforded beautiful specimens of the mode in which controversy should be conducted.

How little have stronger Christians acted on the direc-

* See Exhortation, p. 44.

† See his Letters, Vol. i. 116.

‡ See Milner, Vol. ii. 468.

tion, *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.* Supposing our views to be correct, why should we despise others (Matt. xviii. 10.) as unworthy of our affection and communion, for some weakness in their understanding? How little love there is in this scorn and disdain of those whom we think to be in the wrong! Let us melt in pity and tenderness on their behalf: it will often do far more for union and edification than 'depth of learning, knowledge of antiquity, authority of councils, sharpness of wit, and the name of Church,' and all those things to which we attach the most weight. Hard names serve only to exasperate; harshly judging others leads them harshly to judge us. Christ's rule is, *judge not.* The moralist condemns the doctrinalist for enthusiasm and antinomianism, and is in his turn condemned for subverting the gospel. Churchmen and dissenters rail against each other.* The lukewarm man accuses the zealous of pride and making a party, and he, in his turn, is charged with lukewarmness and spiritual death; and love mourns and sighs over all. One word

* These things are seen in their true light in a dying hour. Lewis Du Moulin had in his life time published various violent and bitter things against churchmen. But on his death-bed he had the piety and integrity to sign the following recantation: 'As for my books, in which I mixed many personal reflections, I am now sensible I mixed too much of my own passions and bitterness; and therefore I disclaim all that is personal in them, and am heartily sorry for every thing I have written to the defaming of any person. I humbly beg God, and all those I have so wronged, pardon, for Jesus Christ's sake: and am resolved, if God shall spare my life, never to meddle more with such personal things; and do earnestly exhort all people, as a dying man, that they will study more love and mutual forbearance in their differences, and will avoid all bitter and uncharitable reflections. And as I pray those worthy men of the church of England to have charity and tenderness for the dissenters from them; so I beg of the dissenters, that they would have a due regard and respect to those of the Church of England; of many of whom I now say, let my soul be with theirs; and that all true Protestants may heartily unite and concur in the defence and preservation of the holy reformed religion, now by the mercy of God settled among us. And that men of all sides may, according to St. Paul's rule, cease to bite and devour one another, lest we be destroyed one of another: and that whereunto we have already attained, we may walk by the same rule, hoping that if any man is otherwise minded in some lesser things, God shall either reveal that to him, or mercifully forgive it, through Jesus Christ, into whose hands I commend my spirit, and desire to appear before God in and through Him who gave himself for me; and therefore do now study to learn of Him to be meek and lowly in heart, and to love all the brethren as he loved me.'

Oct. 5, 1680.

LEWIS DU MOULIN.'

spoken in love would often do more than a thousand words of hard censure, or of volumes of controversy.

It may promote this spirit of love ever to remember our own natural blindness, our obligations to divine grace, and our limited knowledge at best. Human judgment on divine things is formed by imperfect and sinful man from the divine light imparted to them, and according to the evidence that comes before them. We can seldom discern the whole of any case. However sound, therefore, our judgment may be before our fellow-creatures, it is at the best very imperfect before God ; but however defective it may appear to men, there may be views on the evidence before our minds, in which it may be correct. We must not then despise each other's judgment. The main thing requisite to form a judgment according to the mind of God, the only thing of supreme importance, is to have that spiritual mind, which enables us to discern something of the relative proportion and value of all things, and raises us above the natural selfishness of our hearts, and that divine teaching which guides unto all truth.

We may learn hence to be very forbearing, and tender to each other's apparent ignorances and infirmities. Something in the conduct of another may to us appear very untrue and unjust, very severe and uncharitable ; but, perhaps, the light of heaven may discover to us, that that which had this appearance was in reality from the situation of that person, and the evidence before him, an embracing of the truth, and an exercise of great forbearance, kindness, justice, and charity. To their unspeakable and most joyful surprise, Christian acquaintances, who were cold and suspicious on earth, may hereafter find that they greatly wronged each other, and learn afresh to admire that grace from which all that is good really comes, and which has pardoned and accepted all.

Let us ever remember the nature of charity ; as it *bear-eth*, or *covereth*, *all things*, *believeth all things*, *hopeth all things*, *endureth all things*. *Charity never faileth*. This will lead us to put, if possible, a favourable construction on the

words of those from whom we differ, and enable us far more effectually to illustrate the real doctrine. Men very often mean the same truth, while they express it differently. Yet never let us affect that spurious charity which is the offspring of indifference and infidelity. We must on the one hand *hold fast the form of sound words*, and on the other *speak the truth in love*. Divine Spirit! Thou Spirit of truth and love! enable us to manifest by these graces that we are thine!

Remember that NO TRUTH IS REVEALED IN THE SCRIPTURES FOR SPECULATIVE PURPOSES, and that however CHRISTIANS may differ on speculative points, they AGREE IN DESIRING ONE AND THE SAME PRACTICAL INFLUENCE. Ten thousand things are not revealed, which our curiosity would prompt us to wish had been revealed. Nothing is manifested but what is profitable for us. The divine sovereignty, the freedom of grace, the operations of the Holy Ghost, the attributes of God, the judgment to come, are all most influential in producing those holy tempers and dispositions which Christians profess universally to desire, and without which we are not meet for the heavenly inheritance. It should tend to draw good men nearer to each other, to remember, that however they may form different speculative conclusions, on doctrinal points, from the same passages, if real Christians, they agree in practical conclusions, and they wish for themselves, and for each other the highest possible degrees, attainable on earth, of faith, hope, and love, of conformity to the divine mind and will, of humility, contrition, self-denial, and devotedness to God. Here there is no dispute among them. The differences of real Christians are more as to the mode of producing these results, than as to the results themselves; and how painful that those differences should often be so maintained as to destroy the very results which they are aiming to produce. *Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.**

* It is an important truth 'Si in necessariis sit unitas, in non necessariis libertas, in utriusque charitas, optimo certe loco essent res nostræ.'

Be willing to SUSPEND YOUR JUDGMENT ON DOUBTFUL POINTS. Is there nothing to be revealed hereafter? Are there no higher attainments of knowledge, even after years of experience in the Christian life and of lengthened study? Will not the glory of the heavenly world throw a full blaze of light which we cannot now anticipate? *What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.* There is much holy confidence and submission to God and many other Christian feelings to be exercised in such a suspense of judgment. On great points, on the salvation of Christ, free justification, adoption, and sanctification, let us be very bold and strenuous, and *contend earnestly for the faith*; on more doubtful points, when we have not clear views, and our opinion is asked, let us reply with Augustine—‘I had rather know than be ignorant of the questions which you ask me; but because I cannot attain it, I had rather admit a cautious ignorance, than profess a false knowledge.’ This seems to have been the habit of his mind.

Endeavour to derive PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT FROM CONTROVERSY. Differences of opinion should teach us many practical lessons. When eminent scholars and Christians disagree in important points, how plain the duty not to lean to our own understanding, but to be as babes before our God, ever seeking His guidance! This is a school in which we should learn humility, forbearance, and candour, the weakness of human reason, the inestimable benefit of that body of unquestionable and incontrovertible truth which we have in God’s book, and the absolute necessity of having God’s word as the only foundation of our faith. Seek to make a practical use of known truth, and that which is unknown will by degrees, as far as it is profitable, be revealed to you.

The different views of Christians have sometimes been perverted to keep men from all religion. Persons have made it an excuse for wholly neglecting their souls. They have gladly availed themselves of such a plausible argument, and God, leaving them to their own wicked wishes, has allowed them, in just judgment, to go on in the way

which they desired, till it issued in their everlasting ruin. They blind their minds now with the sophistry, 'Let Christians agree on their religion, and then I will attend to it.' The sophistry will all be dispelled at the day of judgment, and the neglect of plain things, because of differences about more obscure things, will only disclose and evidence the real cause of this neglect—an inward hatred of God and his ways. How many things are perfectly clear and undisputed, among all having any pretence to the name of Christians ! Attend to those. There is a glorious God—there is a complete Saviour—there is a Guide, and Sanctifier, and Comforter—there is pardon for sin, meetness for heaven, resurrection from the dead, judgment to come, and immortal bliss for the righteous. You cannot doubt these—they are clear—they are without controversy. Use them daily and improve them, and intermeddle not with things doubtful and mysterious, till you lose all religious principles and all hope.

But if called to maintain and defend scriptural truth, remember, that without the experience of the power of that truth, you are little qualified to be its advocate, and can do little good. Dr. Owen strongly urges the importance of having abiding in our hearts the power of the truth contended for. He justly says—(see his Works, vol. viii. p. 79.) —' When not the sense of the words, but of the things, is in our hearts ; when we have communion with God in the doctrine we contend for, then shall we be garrisoned by the grace of God against all the assaults of men. Without this, all our contending is of no value to ourselves. What am I the better if I can dispute that Christ is God, but have no sense that he is a God in covenant with my soul ? What will it avail me to evince, by testimonies and arguments, that he has made satisfaction for sin, if, through my unbelief, the wrath of God abides on me ? Will it be any advantage to me in the issue to profess and dispute that God works the conversion of a sinner, by the irresistible grace of his Spirit, if I was never acquainted, experimentally, with that opposition to the law of God, which is

in my own soul by nature ; and with the efficacy of the exceeding greatness of the power of God, in quickening, enlightening, and bringing forth the fruits of obedience in me ? It is the power of the truth in the heart alone, that will make us cleave to it indeed in an hour of temptation. Let us not then think that we are any thing the better for our conviction of the great doctrines of the gospel, unless we have a continual experience of their necessity and excellency in our standing before God, and our communion with him.'

When shall we rise to those higher regions of Christianity, that purer and better air of Christian faith, and hope, and love ; in which some of God's favoured servants have lived :—like Enoch walking with God ; or like Paul saying, *I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved ?*

The conflict with a man's own corruptions is one step towards this. When daily struggling with the power of inward sin, and humbled to the dust under the continual rebuffs of Satan, when sensible that there is an inward scene of abominations which man beholds not, but God beholds ; who can be severe against his neighbour ? Leighton well speaks of 'one useful controversy or dispute, one sort of war, most noble in its nature, and most worthy of a Christian, and this not to be carried on against enemies at a great distance, but such as are bred within our own breasts ; against these it is most reasonable to wage an endless war, and them it is our duty to persecute to death.'

A view of the glory of the Saviour is another step towards that holy and heavenly spirit. The Church cannot be united till, like the inhabitants above, we behold *His glory, as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth* ; and thence, filled with love and admiration, aim at this one object, the advancement of his honour, and the exaltation of His name.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DANGERS CONNECTED WITH STUDIES.

THERE may be some ready at first to think that there is little need to dwell on this point, and that we should rather urge the indolent to active study, than warn men of the dangers of study. But the address made by the prophet Isaiah to Babylon of old, is still too applicable in our day — *Thy wisdom and thy knowledge it hath perverted thee ; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and there is none besides me.* And it must be admitted that wicked men, the more learning they have, are the more dangerous to the truth. Their abuse of knowledge has led pious men to undervalue learning, as if it was the cause of this evil, and as if the acquired knowledge was to blame for the moral depravity ; but it may effectually guard against such errors to look at the extensive usefulness of Augustine and Chrysostom in the general Church ; or of Usher, Hall, or Beveridge, in the Church of England : or Owen, Charnock, Howe, and Edwards, among those of another communion.

Yet are there real dangers encompassing and surrounding every human attainment, and our corruption breaks forth amidst all that which should restrain it. We see immense learning, and we hope real piety, in many Romanists, such as Bellarmine and others, and all their talents and learning perverted to the maintenance of fundamental errors. We see learning without piety extensively injurious ; puffing up its possessor with intolerable pride, and leading him to the haughty and disdainful contempt of all who have not similar acquirements.

But let us notice more distinctly some of the dangers of study.

The first that may be mentioned is FORMING OUR RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS FROM OUR OWN REASONING POWERS, rather than from the divine record. Truths, we are tempted to think, are to be made out by argument, by intellect, by the powers of the mind, and by human literature. Like our first parents, we are seeking divine wisdom independently of God. Let these controlling thoughts reign over and regulate our studies : God only can teach the things of God ; He teaches in His word, and under the guidance of His Holy Spirit ; every thing must be subject to that word, and every thought brought *into captivity to the obedience of Christ*. No merely human opinion will stand against His word ; nor will our own notions in the least help us when we appear before Him, and have to give account how far we have believed and acted according to that word. The love of our own sentiments, because they are our own, seeking to display our skill rather than to exercise holy feelings, and the desire to maintain sentiments which have been once, and perhaps without due premeditation, avowed, have led to much mischief. Beware of your own particular views, and especially of an early declaration of them. There is also another view in which we may regard this danger ; when we receive things only as we can comprehend them by reason. We may see to what an awful extent this has been carried among the Neologians on the continent, who aiming to subject every part of revelation to their own vain conceptions of what is right and wrong, enter into the very regions of infidelity. But there is a serious degree of the same evil among professing Christians. Every thing is, with some, to be so made out by reason, or propped up by human traditions, that no room is left for faith in the promises. They will go as far as these will carry them, but they hesitate where God's word only speaks. Now though God's service is in the highest degree *a reasonable service*, yet the very peculiarity of Christianity is faith in

the promise. This made the whole army of believers (Heb. xi.) so triumphant ; this carried the Apostles and the Reformers through difficulties otherwise insurmountable. Only as we live by faith, and above the scanty reach of this world's wisdom, are we genuine Christians, glorifying God and advancing the gospel. See 1 Cor. i. 11.

2. A similar danger to the one last mentioned, is, TAKING OUR SENTIMENTS MERELY FROM HUMAN AUTHORS : we say *merely*, for there is a just respect due to human authority. Parents must teach their children the first principles of religion ; ministers must teach their people the gospel of Christ ; and children and people should hear with meekness and submission the word of truth. But Christian parents and faithful teachers will be anxious in every truth which they teach, to bring before those whom they instruct the only sure foundation of truth, the word of God ; and to tell them, " Take it not on my word, but on the word of Him who is my Teacher and my Father, as well as yours ; " this will give its just strength to religious truth, and lay a foundation that will support the soul amid all the shakings and storms of this life. Too generally, however, we are leaning not on Jehovah and His truth, but on man and his opinions ; and the turning-point in our minds is not the overwhelming testimony of the sacred word, after a due search of that word, but the weight of human testimony, and so human writings thrust out the divine record. Luther expressed his fear, even in his day, of ' too great a multiplication of books : that as fathers, councils, and doctors had superseded the apostles, so it should be again ; and he modestly said he wished his own books to last only for the age in which they were written, and which they might serve ; believing that God would give to succeeding ages their own labourers, as he had always heretofore done.'

It marks a tendency to this danger when Christians are too much afraid of men of this world's literature, and pay too much court to them, and speak too highly of them, as if men greatly skilled in human learning were, on that

account alone, to have great deference shown to them in religion ; if nationally God addressed his people, ‘ I have raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece : ’ the day too will come, when spiritually it will be seen, that to be a member of Zion, to receive the lively oracles, to know and love God, is infinitely superior to all the acquirements of classical literature, and all the arts and sciences of the world.

3. IMPROPER MOTIVES FOR STUDY are very common. Some will read to pass away the time ; others to be able to talk of a book ; others to gain admiration by criticising it ; others because they shall be thought ignorant if they have not read it. There are those who will read for the very purpose of finding fault and cavilling. What spiritual profit can be expected from books which are read from these motives ? how can improvement be reaped when it was not even thought of, or sought for ! The mere acquisition of knowledge, for the pleasure which it gives, or for the superiority which it confers, is not that Christian motive from which we should pursue our studies. The Rev. Mr. Adam forcibly observes, ‘ Reading is for the most part only a more refined species of sensuality, and answers man’s purpose of shuffling off his great work with God and himself, as well as a ball or a masquerade.’ Our chief motives should be of a far higher kind : to know, that we may do, the will of God ; to be better fitted for serving him and our fellow-creatures here : and better prepared for the everlasting state on which we are so soon to enter.

4. MISDIRECTION IN STUDY is a very serious danger. When first a thirst of knowledge is excited in the mind, it is immensely important to be directed aright. If misdirected, or if following only accidental circumstances, a person reads that which only leads him astray, it may cost him many a wearisome step back again, and days and years of usefulness may be for ever lost. There have been ministers who have honestly and openly before their people felt themselves constrained to retract what before they had

taught as divine truth ; and infinitely safer and happier is so painful a result, than when *the blind lead the blind* till, in the end, both are lost. In general it is not safe to go wholly in the track of any human party ; we have all our partialities. But how shall we be preserved from this danger ? the ignorant need a guide, and those without knowledge cannot but look to others who at least possess more learning and more information than themselves. The chief guard is the word of God, read with fervent prayer, and practised as far as we know with holy fear. Possessing this fear, while a man only goes as far as he has clear testimonies of scripture, he will either never materially err, or will in the result be preserved from all fatal misdirection. Remember, *with the well-advised is wisdom.* Prov. xiii. 10.

5. THE NEGLECT OF PRACTICAL PIETY is another danger of study. Those who have eagerly entered into studies have felt this. It is the remark of Huetius, in describing his own experience on this point, 'I was entirely carried away by the pleasure which I found in learning, and that endless variety which it affords had so taken up my thoughts, and seized all the avenues of my mind, that I was altogether incapable of any sweet and intimate communication with God. These wanderings and indisposition of mind have ever been my grand failing, and they still break in on my prayers, and quite deprive me of all the benefit that I should reap from them. When I withdrew into religious retirement, in order to re-collect my scattered thoughts, and fix them on heavenly things, I experienced a dryness and insensibility of soul, by which the Holy Spirit seemed to punish this excessive bent to learning, and the indifference which I had for my spiritual advancement.'

From the intense interest which close study calls forth, and from the immense importance of the truths which we are considering, we are apt to get so abstracted in our studies as to neglect our daily duties. Hereafter we shall contemplate, admire, and enjoy ; here we are born to toil

and labour. But, in fact, no studies teach more effectually, as we have shown, than a faithful practice of religion ; intercourse with the poor, visits to the sick and dying, actual conversations with persons in spiritual difficulties, give an experimental knowledge of Theology far beyond books. Never let that time be given to private studies, which positive and plain duties call for. For instance, the duties of his station in life, must not be neglected by the Christian ; the duties of visiting, instructing, and comforting the sick, the tempted, and the afflicted must not be omitted, in order to attend to private studies. God gives different gifts. Some men are more especially qualified for learned pursuits, and called to them, and may therefore more entirely devote themselves to them ; but might not some who have been thus occupied, who have seemed to vegetate in books, and to bring no results of real profit to the Church, have been far better employed in directly practical and beneficial services to the Church ? We must attend to the practical part of religion, if we would avoid the dangers of merely theoretical views in the mind, which may be worse than useless.

We sometimes see the painful case of one who is fully acquainted with the theory of religion, but ignorant of its power ; having bright intellectual light on the subject of religion, but no spiritual perception. Such an one may have very clear views of the truth, and be able to state them distinctly, and to instruct and edify others, but yet be far from that meekness, humility, love, and heavenly-mindedness which mark the Christian ;—he has that carnal mind, which *is death* ; but not that spiritual mind, which *is life and peace*. It is very possible to hold *the truth in unrighteousness* ; and of all characters this is the most awful, for it takes the very weapons that should overthrow sin, and either locks them up, or blunts their edge, or turns them to the maintenance of that which they should destroy.

Bishop Butler makes a reflection which is most awakening and important to all students and teachers, that, ‘Going

over the theory of virtue in our thoughts, talking well, and drawing fine pictures of it, this is so far from necessarily or certainly conducing to the habit of it, in him who thus employs himself, that it may harden the mind in a contrary course, and form a habit of insensibility to all moral obligations. For from our very faculty of habits, passive impressions by being repeated grow weaker, and thoughts by often passing through the mind are felt less sensibly.' Let us very seriously and constantly watch against this danger, by personally and practically applying to ourselves the truths which we learn or teach. Watch against your studies tempting you to neglect devotion. Nothing is a more common snare, and none more ruinous than to think that knowledge is a more desirable attainment than piety—speculative truths than devout and holy feelings. You can neither obtain personal advantage from reading, nor be eminently useful among your fellow-Christians, whatever literary acquirements you may obtain, without the spirit of devotion, and that impressive and realizing communion with God, which will give spirituality and unction in all your intercourse with others.

6. A CONTEMPT OF OTHERS, IF THEY ARE IGNORANT, is another danger of study ; if a man cannot with logical exactness define his sentiments, or does not know languages, or has not read certain books, a learned student will despise him ; but, as Bishop Bedell observes, ' Religion is not logic, and as he that cannot give a true definition of the soul, is not for that reason without a soul ; so he that defines not faith truly, may nevertheless have true faith.' But how little reason is there for contempt, when we remember that besides human industry, divine teaching is absolutely requisite for acquiring saving knowledge ; and a man cumbered with the whole load of human learning, may after all be a castaway, and only perish with an aggravated condemnation : while a man with no more knowledge than the publican, or the dying thief, or the converted jailor, may yet be justified and for ever saved. We ought to *honour all men.* Every human being has an immortal soul,

which is of more value than all the world. If only a man attain salvation and thus secure his everlasting welfare, whatever other attainment he fails of, or is disappointed in, he will in the result be found to be infinitely wiser and happier, than the most prosperous and learned worldly man who loses that soul. How instructive the history of the rich man and Lazarus ! Remember, *a scorner seeketh wisdom and findeth it not.*

7. Another danger which may be considered under this head, is not obvious at first sight, but is of very extensive and mischievous consequences, namely, that of LEARNING LEADING US TO SPEAK OR preach RATHER TO THE CAPACITY OF THE LEARNED, THAN TO THE CAPACITY OF those whom we have chiefly to address, THE MIDDLE AND THE LOWER CLASSES.—Nothing is more difficult than for a learned man to speak familiarly, plainly, and perspicuously to the poor, and to bring the great truths of religion, simply and obviously before them. It requires the highest stretch of intellect to do this. The following fact may illustrate these sentiments : Luther and Bucer had both been preaching at a meeting of Protestants, and Luther with remarkable energy and effect. ‘After Bucer’s Sermon, he supped with Luther, who in the course of conversation commended the discourse of his guest, but added that he himself was the better preacher.’ Bucer receiving this remark with his accustomed mildness, assented. Luther then spoke seriously and said, ‘Do not think that I mean to boast foolishly, I well know my own deficiencies, and that I am unable to deliver such an ingenious and learned discourse, as we have this day heard from you ; but when I am in the pulpit I consider who my hearers are, and because the greater part are unlearned and simple people, I preach what I think they can understand. But you take a higher flight, but are not understood by our poor people. In this I act like a kind mother who gives her craving infant the breast, thus feeding it with her milk as well as she is able, and thinks this better for its nourishment, than if mixed with the sweetest and choicest syrups,

and preparations of art.' Luther said on another occasion, ' They are the best preachers for the common people who teach familiarly, in a homely way, popularly, and most simply.'*

8. **INTELLECTUAL PRIDE** is perhaps the chief danger of study. A man may so pursue even religious studies as to foster the most evil passions of pride, self-exaltation, ambition, love of power, and the like. He may seek to be a great divine rather than a sincere Christian. Dr. Owen speaks instructively of this temptation, (Works, Vol. vii. 472.) ' A man begins to be in repute for piety, wisdom, learning, or the like : he is spoken of much to that purpose ; his heart is tickled to hear of it, and his pride and ambition affected with it. If this man now with all his strength ply the things from whence his repute, and esteem, and glory among men do spring, with a secret eye to have it increased, he is entering into temptations, which if he take not heed, will quickly render him a slave of lust. So it was with Jehu, he perceived that his repute for zeal began to grow abroad, and he got honour by it ; Jonadab comes in his way, a good and holy man ; now, thinks Jehu, I have an opportunity to grow in the honour of my zeal, so he calls Jonadab to him and to work he goes most seriously : the things he did were good in themselves, but he was entered into temptation, and served his lust in all he did. So it is with many scholars, they find themselves esteemed and favoured for their learning, this takes hold of the pride and ambition of their hearts ; hence they set themselves to study with all diligence, day and night, a thing good in itself, but they do it that they may satisfy the thoughts and words of men wherein they delight ; and so in all they do, they make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. It is true, God oftentimes brings light out of this darkness, and turns things to a better issue. After, it may be, a man has studied sundry years with an eye upon his lusts ; his ambition, pride, and vain glory ;

* See History of the Church of Christ, Vol. vi., and Melchior Adam's Lives of Bucer and of Luther.

rising early and going to bed late, to give them satisfaction, God comes in with his grace, turns the soul to himself; robs those Egyptian lusts, and so consecrates that to the use of the Tabernacle which was provided for idols.'

The first suggestion of Satan was to excite unbelief, and the next was to foster pride. The first lessons in the school of Christ are to trust only in the Lord, and to renounce all our wisdom. *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. Be not wise in thine own eyes.* The wish to set ourselves above all others, is a manifest evidence of our fallen nature.

This intellectual pride infinitely overvalues languages, literature, and human science, and underrates our natural darkness, and slights Christ and His Spirit. Philip Henry (himself no contemptible scholar) remarks on Isaiah l. 4. (*The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned, &c.*) 'The true learning of a gospel minister consists not in being able to talk Latin fluently, and to dispute in philosophy, but in being able to speak a word in season to weary souls. He that knows how to do that well is a learned minister.'

How great is the danger of literary pride! It puts God at a distance from us. He *knoweth the proud afar off*. Psalm cxxxviii. 6. He dwells in the lowly bosom.

9. MISUSING AND ABUSING TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE is also to be guarded against. It indeed more often arises from the want of study than from study: but learned men also deal with scripture with a rashness and boldness that leads to much perversion and abuse. There is need of this caution to all classes. How often is that text abused, *Charity shall cover the multitude of sins*—(1 Peter iv. 8.) by applying the term sins to our own sins, and not those of our fellow-creatures. (See Proverbs x. 12.) Thus the text in Micah, *What does the Lord require of thee, but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God*, (with similar texts, such as Eccles. xii. 13, &c.) has been applied to the notion that we can be saved by our own obedience, instead of the true use, to show us our duty,

quicken us to perform it, and humble us in the sense of our disobedience. Very many instances of this kind might be given. It is a very dangerous thing thus to pervert God's word. Men seldom fall into the sin of literally taking away from or adding sentences to God's word ; but they often commit this sin, in spirit, by taking away from or adding to the sense of scripture, and putting their own perverted construction, so as in reality totally to change the word of God. But how awful are the solemn and closing declarations of scripture, *If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book : and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.* An author may well tremble at his own responsibility under such a declaration.

10. READING BOOKS WHICH WE ARE WELL SATISFIED ARE ERRONEOUS, out of mere curiosity, is no uncommon danger. To read what is to our own conscience a manifestly erroneous book, unless there be a clear call of duty to do so, such as the necessity we may be under of answering it, for the conviction of those with whom we are connected, who have been misled by it, is the very way to unsettle our own minds and perplex our paths. It is dangerous to try the strength of the constitution by tampering with poison ; and it is yet more dangerous to tamper with error which is spiritual poison. It may be necessary for a clergyman to have books of this kind, for the sake of reference, but there are many books which he may have in his library which it would be very prejudicial for him to be often reading, as it would either generate a controversial spirit, or deteriorate and lower his own tone of religion.*

11. There is a danger of OVERVALUING, OR UNDULY PRESSING WHAT IS IN ITSELF GOOD. Let not the student

* There is an excellent Letter of the Rev. John Newton's on this subject, in his Works, Vol. vi. p. 419—433.

fall into that which in medicine would be called *quackery* : or give any one particular truth that prominence, and make it of that exclusive importance, as if it alone would heal all our spiritual maladies. It is true that all truth is intimately associated, and if you hold one distinctly, others are implied : it is true that eminent men have been raised up to revive particular truths, and have been honoured in doing so : but from an overweening conceit of our own wisdom, not regarding that infinite wisdom, which, seeing every exigency of the soul, has in the scripture met that exigency with appropriate truth, we may here fall into serious mistake, to the great injury of ourselves and others. This evil is the more serious when our own notions are regarded as this eminent truth. We may think our own views to be so essential to religion, that if men hold these things, they are religious ; and if they hold them not, they are not religious. The remedy of this danger is, first, the scriptural *proportion of faith* ; let us give things that prominence which the Scriptures do, and omit nothing which the Scriptures reveal as truth : and then use constant prayer for divine help, to keep us from leaning to our own understanding.

12. In addition to general dangers, common to all, each individual has IN HIS PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES SPECIAL TEMPTATIONS. Each age, and each situation of life has these : those of youth are rashness, credulity, presumption, unmeasured statements, &c.—those of age are excessive caution, hesitation, delay, suspicion, and complaining.* The rich and great are in danger of haughtiness and dogmatism ; and the poor of cringing or speaking evil. Men of brilliant talents, and of lively imagination ; men of profound and close thinking, and men of tender and affectionate feelings, have each the respective dangers of their peculiar excellencies : these things may become temptations and affect our reception of the truth, and we should watch and pray against them. Divine grace can

* Some of these dangers are forcibly pointed out in Aristotle's Rhetoric. Book II. chap. xii. &c.

give our natural tendencies a happy direction, and make us in every station *like a tree that bringeth forth his fruit in his season.*

13. If there be these dangers in *religious* study, there are not fewer DANGERS to the soul in SCIENTIFIC STUDIES. These are in their place important, but if pursued without religious views and feelings, they may lead to serious mischief. Paul was peculiarly neglected and derided at Athens. While in the dark ages we have seen the low state to which religion was reduced without learning ; we have also seen, in the last century, on a prodigious scale, the miseries produced by unsanctified science through the continent. Immense talents, without religious control or restraint, became a vast engine for desolating the world ; the worst human passions were let loose by men of fine genius, and wit, and science, and in their wild licentiousness every kind of iniquity abounded. In fact, modern political economy, “the balance of power,” physical science, and similar pursuits have been, as it were, the dens and caves of the earth in which men have sought to shelter themselves from God and his truth. Rev. vi. 15.

Religion re-acts with a great blessing on science ; but how little can science do for man’s highest happiness without religion ! While it is a great satisfaction to be able to state that the men who have made the greatest advances in science have been steady friends to religion ; it cannot be denied that men of science have sometimes been found among the leaders of infidelity. They cannot bear the humbling truths of religion, and are filled with indignation at its holy and strict requirements ; and, *vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind*, they neither enter themselves, nor willingly allow others to enter the kingdom of heaven. It has been justly said :—“ In all ages of the world it has been the way of mankind to bestow far greater pains upon the cultivation of the faculties, the strengthening of the reasoning powers, and the refining of taste, than upon the less pleasing and more arduous task of correcting vicious propensities and habits, purifying the conscience, and fix-

ing in the mind principles of piety and charity. The cultivation of the understanding gratifies the pride of man, while the discipline of the passions implies its mortification." After shewing very forcibly the dangers which may follow, from the mere cultivation of the intellect, it is added, "Whatever has a manifest tendency to exalt the dignity of the human understanding, to the disparagement of practical religious knowledge, or to make the one entirely independent of the other, we deprecate and withstand, as inconsistent with that true philosophy, and we may add that genuine philanthropy, whose chief aim and lesson is to cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and that the soul may be fit to partake in his means of grace, and his promises of glory. We are persuaded by experience as well as certified by the word of God, that, as with the truly religious man, every fresh accession of knowledge, of what kind soever, teaches a lesson of humility, and adds to the materials of piety and thankfulness, so with the unbeliever and the profane,—each step which is taken in the paths of science is one step further from God, inasmuch as it ministers to pride and self-sufficiency, and exalts understanding above conscience and the testimony of the Spirit."

MEDICAL AND LEGAL STUDENTS, in pursuing their professional studies, are exposed to many temptations, which may materially affect and injure their higher pursuits of religious knowledge. Each profession has had, and still has, eminent and well-instructed Christians; but in the course of the lectures which medical men attend, not to speak of materialism, is there not a leaving of God out of His own world, and an introducing of another deity, under the terms "Nature," and "course of nature?" It is to be feared that the Christian student will find many of his fellow-students, in both professions, to be professed infidels, and many without any religion! Seductions will be presented on every side, either to give up his religion, or wholly to neglect it. Be aware of such dangers. Be cau-

tious in the choice of your companions ; do not willingly and unnecessarily join yourself to the wicked. Be not easily drawn into argument with those who only want to display their own infidelity. It is our duty to give a solid answer to a real inquirer, for the truth's sake ; it is not our duty to attempt to meet every cavil of the captious. Simply confess your Saviour by your testimony and conduct, and your character will, in the result, be the best evidence of your principles. See O'Brien's Lawyer.

It is well to be acquainted with these dangers, that we may watch against them. Humility and the fear of the Lord, a praying spirit and a single eye, will keep a man in the right path. The Lord will watch over those who confide in Him, and His Spirit will guide them into all truth.

I cannot close this chapter better than in the devout words of Ambrose Serle, from his *Horæ Solitariae*, a work full of fine devotional feeling : ‘ O thou believer ! pray to be emptied more and more of thyself, of thy carnal will, and of all thy unsanctified knowledge, that thou mayest be filled with Jesus, and with that wisdom which leadeth to the contemplation of God, and to the everlasting enjoyment of him. Neither much nor little human knowledge will hurt thee, if it be thus subordinate in thy soul to that which is divine. Learning is a useful servant, but must never be the master. Let it follow thee to Christ, and not lead thee from him. If thou art rightly taught, thou wilt see the shallowness of all human erudition, and how little *that* deserves the name of science which mortals are proud to know. Thou wilt learn the most difficult and abstruse subject in the world, which no man ever could learn without divine instruction ; even thine own **IGNORANCE**—a branch of knowledge which men abhor to be acquainted with, but which, after all, is the summit of their attainments upon earth. . . . Be watchful over every earthly furniture of the mind ; because in this corrupt state it will naturally bear a close attachment to envy and pride. When thou art sweetly taught of God, thou wilt see aright

in what rank thou art to place all human attainments. . . One lesson from Christ will make thy heart burn far more than all the pompous knowledge, or rather splendid ignorance of the schools ; he will instruct thee, not only by lessons of wisdom, but also by lessons of love. He has promised to be with his people always, and to the end of the world ; and therefore he will ever be with thee, guiding thee by his counsel till he hath brought thee to glory.* *

* Horæ Solit. Vol. i. pp. 264, 265.

CHAPTER IX.

PRACTICAL RULES FOR STUDY.

IN all our conduct it is important to keep a vigilant eye upon that which God mainly regards, the heart, or the motives which influence our minds. This is especially important in study. Time may be wasted or lost in reading, nay in reading valuable works, if the motives which influence us be carnal,—if the end be unworthy.

We are apt to aim at wrong ends. The general principle, *Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*, should regulate also our studies. No Christian can have studied much, without experiencing the temptations which are connected with it, to deviate from this principle. Could we more simply aim at the right end in acquiring knowledge, how often would it rectify, and improve, and elevate our studies! We might not gain so quickly the increase of that knowledge which increases sorrow, (Eccles. i. 18.) ; we might not have a name among men, but we should gain that better wisdom which comes from above.

A few practical rules may direct the reader's mind to those points, which call for most attention, and may most materially assist him in his progress.

1. EVER REMEMBER the VAST IMPORTANCE OF A RIGHT STATE OF MIND, in order to profitable study. Look at the case of the Corinthians. The Apostle would not teach them the more difficult doctrines of religion, because their minds were worldly and carnal. He fed them with milk

and not with meat, because they could not bear the meat. A carnal mind, in real converts, will thus prevent them from receiving the whole truth. The grand impediments to the acquisition of truth are those which concern the state of the mind ; such as the pride of learning, the desire of victory, the love of ease and preferment in this world, ranging ourselves under human authority and popular opinion, joining one side, and the like. And the great help to its acquisition is a pure and holy, a teachable, meek, and humble mind, a mind open to the scriptures, and ready to bow submissively to the whole will of God. Thus has God made the extensive range of divine truth, in all its parts, the test and the reward of a simple and upright mind. Such a mind readily embraces it ; while on the other hand a proud and worldly mind pollutes or rejects it. The ambitious desire an occasion of finding fault with views which they dislike, and God, who designs to discriminate men's characters by His own truth, lets them have occasion of stumbling in abundance, and they stumble perhaps for ever. But those very offences on which they stumble, lead the upright to a more close waiting on God, till they attain the truth. As the best food is unpleasant to a disordered stomach, and hurts the health, and the bright light is painful to weak and diseased eyes, and injures the sight : so if our minds be carnal and impure, the purest truths will only irritate and offend our bad passions. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* Let a man have real sanctification, which, Archbishop Usher says, is nothing less than for a man to be brought to an entire resignation of his will to the will of God, and to live in the offering up of his soul continually in the flames of love as a whole burnt-offering to Christ, and he has the best preparation for profitable study. We would then recommend the student often to examine his motives for studying, and the state of his mind.*

* *Questions for Self-Examination, chiefly extracted from an old writer.*

What is my great design in giving myself to study, and what is my daily view and purpose in pursuing it?

2. **ESPECIALLY SEEK REAL HUMILITY.** Cultivate a humble spirit in all your studies. 'Humility,' one of the Fathers observes, 'is like the violet which grows low on the ground, hangs the head downward, hides itself with its own leaves, and were it not that its fragrance betrays it to the observation of others, would choose to live and die in its own pleasing obscurity.' The highest archangel is the most prostrate before the throne of God, and the nearest approaches to him are marked, as we see in Abraham, Job, Isaiah, and Paul, by the deepest humility. Do not affect to have universal knowledge : it is out of the question for any human being. The range of knowledge is so vast that we can but know in part. Do not attempt to fathom things that are inscrutable to mortal eyes : some seem to consider themselves obliged to know and determine all that comes before them ; an ingenuous confession of ignorance, where we are ignorant, is true wisdom as well as honesty. The same spirit will lead you not to boast of or display your acquirements, for self-exaltation and vain glory, and to have the mere reputation of learning. All kinds of studies duly improved will promote hu-

Have I entirely given up myself to our Lord Jesus Christ to serve him unreservedly and supremely ?

Do I every day seek direction and blessing from God in all my studies ?

In labouring after knowledge in human sciences, do I always make the service of Christ my supreme design ?

Do I pursue my studies daily as one that must give account of my time and of all my advantages ?

How many hours have I this day spent in study, or in the pursuit of knowledge, allowing for the great maxim, that to pray well is to study well ?

Do I pursue practical divinity as well as the knowledge of doctrines and controversies ?

Am I solicitous that my soul may grow in grace by every increasing degree of Christian knowledge ?

Do I choose my company for their seriousness, as well as for their ingenuity and learning ?

Do I take constant care to avoid all company which may be dangerous to my morals or to my studies ?

Have I been in any company where I have received good myself, or done good to others ?

Have I indulged myself in any thing so as to put my mind out of frame for evening worship ?

Have I suffered any thing to carry away my heart from God, so as to make me neglect devotion, or perform it in a slight or careless manner ?

Do I watch against all evil appetites and passions, and endeavour to subdue them early, that I may learn by my own experience, and teach others by my own example ?

Am I ever seeking the spiritual good of all around me ?

mility, so that the most wise and learned may be, like the divine Saviour, most truly meek and lowly of heart. The experience of the Christian exceedingly promotes this : once he might think himself wise, and strong, and good, but his innumerable mistakes and errors and corruptions, have laid him, when more advanced, in the very dust before God. Humility has been a distinguishing feature in the character of all those who were at the same time eminently pious and learned. Nay, the greatest men in science have ever been the humblest. Sir Isaac Newton, when some one expressed admiration of his discoveries, replied, ‘ Alas ! I am only like a child picking up pebbles on the shore of the great ocean of truth.’

3. DRAW YOUR RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES SIMPLY FROM THE WORD OF GOD. In reading many books there is great danger of being corrupted from the simplicity of pure religion. Heresies have generally sprung from men of superior talents and unsanctified learning, who would not be in subjection to the plain declarations of Scripture. The apostle gives a rule, *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy*. Let all your sentiments on religious subjects be wholly subject to the Bible, and taken not from a few partially-extracted passages, but from an enlarged view of the whole, and a comparison of the different parts of truth one with another. No religious truth is essential, but what is plainly asserted, or may be easily deduced from the Holy Scriptures. All things, then, that human writers assert, must be proved by this test, and received and rejected as they are conformable or not to the only infallible standard. Bishop Pilkington, in his *Exposition on Haggai*, published in 1560, says, ‘ Let the world take heed, for *if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the pit*. This miserable common excuse, which is so often in their mouths, shall not excuse them when they say, Thus we are taught—our ghostly fathers say so—and our fathers before us have so believed : Christ says, *Ye shall both fall into the pit*. Believe no doctrine that teaches to go to heaven other than by Christ freely ; or which is not

written and contained in the Bible ; for that only is the perfect word of God, and which only teaches true salvation.' The old maxim is very true and important, 'a good textuary is a good theologian.' The ancients possessed not the compass to guide them in their voyages, and could not tell where they were unless they saw the stars : blessed be God, we have not only the mariners' compass within the ship, to guide our course across the deep, but the more important compass of the word of God to guide us in our voyage to heaven. We must keep a constant eye on this compass, if we would sail in a straight course. The Reformers (in Edward the Sixth's Primer) taught the whole nation to pray, 'Let me neither follow my own will, nor the fancies of other men, neither let me be beguiled with the masque of old customs, long usages, fathers' decrees, ancient laws, nor any thing that fighteth with thy holy ordinances, and blessed commandments ; but faithfully believe, and stedfastly confess, that to be true godliness which is learned in thy Holy Bible, and according unto that to order my life unto the praise of thy holy name.'

4. GAIN THE HABIT OF EARLY RISING. It is of importance in order to profitable study. Habit will make any reasonable plan easy ; and the hours of morning are generally less liable to be disturbed, and therefore more quiet. Early hours, too, are more favourable to health. Early rising will make a vast difference in favour of your acquiring knowledge, and communicating the results of your acquirements to others. Men who have been eminently useful to their fellow-creatures, have generally been early risers. To those in youth and health, we would say, Rise not later than five o'clock, and never study after ten at night ; the knowledge which is gained after that hour will never compensate for the loss of health, which it so often occasions. Let it however be added, that no studies should infringe on the hours of devotion ; nor yet on those of necessary exercise.

5. BE DILIGENT IN STUDIES. Nothing valuable is attained by the lazy and indolent student, who reads

merely for amusement, to pass away time, and without any close application. Solomon says, *I gave my heart to know wisdom*. On which Dr. Barrow remarks, 'He who made it his choice before all things ; who so earnestly and happily did pray for it : upon whom it is so expressly said that God in a special manner and plentiful measure did bestow it ; who avers God to be the sole Donor of it, (for *the Lord*, says he, *giveth wisdom, out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding*), yet even did he first *give his heart to it* : he did not only gape for it to receive it by mere infusion ; but he worked and studied hard for it : he was indeed a great student, an inquisitive searcher into nature, a curious observer of the world, a profound considerer and comparer of things, and by that industrious course, promoted by the Divine blessing, he arrived at that great stock of so renowned a wisdom. This diligence will lead you to improve opportunities. Bishop Stillingfleet pursued his studies with great advantage in his walks, with a memorandum book, and his great work, the *Origines Sacræ*, is said to have been thus first composed in the fields. Some who have been called to journey much, have been able to read much in journeys. It is not so much superior talent and genius, as diligent, and persevering, and constant industry, that makes men advanced students. None, who have been slothful and indolent, whatever talent they may have had, have been extensively useful ; and none, with industry rightly applied, have failed of attaining both honour and usefulness. 'Nepotian,' Jerome said, 'by daily reading and meditation, had made his soul a library of Christ ; and Blesilla, though she was so far overpowered with weakness and sickness, that her foot would scarce bear her body, yet she was seldom found without a Bible in her hand.'

6. STUDY REGULARLY AND PERSEVERINGLY. Some have more the command of time than others ; but in general we may say, avoid mere desultory reading, and have a regular plan of study. Keep a list of such books as you mean to read, and excepting books of reference, go

through one, before you begin another. Some have found it useful to divide their studies, and give portions of time in the week to each. At any rate, plan, and pursue, a comprehensive course of study. Have a book for every spare hour. Lose not the odd moments, but let there be a book, ready to fill them up. Do not merely skim through solid books. What is thus lightly read, is of little profit. Good books will be much more useful if patiently read, and well weighed, and considered. But still, different kinds of books require to be read in different ways. Lord Bacon justly remarks, ‘Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested ; that is, some books are to be only read in parts ; others to be read, but not cursorily ; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention.’ It has been found useful to mark with a pencil, those passages that most impress your mind, that you may read them again, or refer to them more easily. The habit of study should never be lost. The Rev. Thomas Scott, to the last year of his life, spent many hours every day in his study. If we live only on old stores, we shall never enlarge our knowledge. It is allowed, that it is not easy diligently to pursue a course of persevering study ; our families and our daily duties must not be neglected. It requires fixed plans, vigorously followed up. Our natural indolence and the love of society must be broken through. Cecil says, ‘Every man, whatever be his natural disposition, who would urge his powers to the highest end, must be a man of solitary studies.’ *

7. REFLECT ON WHAT YOU READ. Meditation and reflection are the better half of study. It is the more

* In a review of this work in the *Christian Examiner*, the following additional rule was recommended from the Editor's own experience of its importance. “Do not begin a book lightly, but finish every book which you begin. There is nothing more injurious to the mind, either in an intellectual or theological way, than the habit of passing from book to book, and from subject to subject.” The Rev. John Todd, in his *Student's Guide*, recommends an arrangement on the evening before, of the work to be done the next day : and variety in study ; when wearied with one kind of study, to take a contrasted subject.

difficult, but the more profitable. We like the luxury of letting new thoughts enter our minds, without the trouble of weighing their truth and value. Like the Athenians, we are desiring new things rather than truth. But the way to make thoughts our own, and to attain solid knowledge, and new and original ideas, is to revolve what we read much in our own minds ; to compare it with similar things ; and thus both ascertain its real value, and profitably apply it to use.—‘ It is not so important,’ says Mrs. More, ‘ to know every thing, as to know the exact value of every thing, to appreciate what we learn, and to arrange what we know.’ Miss Bowdler with great justice observes, ‘ The best book or the most instructive conversation will afford little pleasure or advantage by being merely remembered, in comparison with what it might afford, by exciting new reflections in the mind, which lead to a new train of thought, and make the riches of others become in some sort its own.’

Students who are always reading without intermission, and seldom weighing or deliberating, make but little progress in true wisdom. Study and reading, as Locke has observed, are distinct things. A man of great reading is not therefore a man of great knowledge. But patient reflection and unbroken attention have been the great secrets of acquiring the profound knowledge which distinguished such men as Bacon and Newton. Luther thus expresses his views of the best way to make a Christian divine. ‘ Three things make a Divine ; meditation, prayer, and temptation : and three things must be done by the minister of the word—search the Bible, pray seriously, and always remain a learner.’

A due reflection on valuable books will be assisted by reperusing them. There are some practical books that may be read again and again with great advantage : such works as Wilberforce’s *Practical View*, Doddridge’s *Rise and Progress*, Milner’s *Church History*, Scott’s *Essays*, &c. may, especially, after certain intervals, be read over again with more profit the second time than the first. Mr. Cecil

remarks, 'I have long adopted an expedient which I have found of singular service. I have a shelf in my study for tried authors, and one in my mind for tried principles and characters. When an Author has stood a thorough examination, and will bear to be taken as a guide, I put him on the shelf.' The reperusal of such tried authors will be found highly profitable.

8. CONVERSE WITH OTHERS ON THE SUBJECTS WHICH YOU STUDY. Even if you only tell them what you have learnt, the very communication will confirm and enlarge your own ideas ; but it is surprising how much the intercourse of congenial minds, and the interchange of sentiments, enlarges and expands our knowledge. Peter Martyr said of Bucer, that 'he never left his table without being more learned.' Another says, 'mere reading makes a pedant, conversation unfolds, enlarges, and applies the use of books.' There are few things more eminently advantageous than free intercourse with aged and intelligent Christians, or with pious fellow-students. How frequently is time miserably lost when friends assemble together merely to pass it away in such casual conversation as may happen to arise, or any thing that may divert or amuse, without reference to knowledge or edification ! Matt. xii. 36. How invaluable would this time be if rightly improved in the wise discussion of edifying truths, with the spirit of Christian love, and with the desire of glorifying the Saviour. The student should have practical and profitable questions to ask experienced Christians ; and all should be ready and glad to give information to others, a gift which will be returned with profit, for we acquire by communicating. But while we obtain benefit from conversation with intelligent Christians, let it be remembered that even religious acquaintance of too great extent, may waste precious time, fill the mind with self-conceit, and draw it off from deep study.

9. STUDY TRUTH IN ITS USE, rather than in its logical abstract statement. Here the pious and humble mind has a pre-eminent advantage over that of the mere reasoner.

Believing the truth simply as it lies in the Scripture, the lowly and practical Christian views it in its daily application ; a promise fills him with hope ; a threatening excites him to caution ; and a direction leads him to holy practice ; while the mere scholar is spending all his time in looking at its possible meaning, its imaginary bearings, and the defence of his own sentiments. Remember that practice is a most important help to scriptural knowledge. Personal religion, and a deep experience of the power of the gospel, and real devotion, will lead to solid conclusions, while a neglect of these will leave you open to all sorts of error. ‘Studious pursuits,’ it has been observed, ‘from the great hold which they take of the mind, as well as from the importance which we properly attach to them, may produce a habit of thinking when we are called upon to act.’ Obedience and submission to the Divine Will, even though they may interfere with our studies, promote, as we have shown, that state of mind which is most favourable to the acquisition of saving knowledge. Hence many, who are very unlearned as it regards human literature, are deeply acquainted with the divine word.* But if both learning and a holy life cannot be obtained, we can have no doubt which to choose, seeing holiness is essential to our everlasting felicity. Thomas à Kempis presses the same sentiments. ‘Because men are more solicitous to learn much than to live well, they fall into error, and receive little benefit from their studies. In the approach-

* It has been well remarked, ‘Were a man able to write in seven languages ; could he converse daily with the sweets of all the liberal sciences, that polite men ordinarily pretend unto ; did he entertain himself with all the ancient and modern histories ; and could he feast continually on the curiosities which all sorts of learning may bring unto him ; none of all this will afford the ravishing satisfaction, much less would any grosser delights of the senses do it, which he might find in relieving the distresses of a poor, mean, miserable neighbour, and which he might much more find in doing any extensive service for the kingdom of our great Saviour in the world, or any thing to redress the miseries under which mankind is generally languishing.’ See Cotton Mather’s Student and Pastor. It was a weighty saying of Archbishop Williams, ‘I have passed through many places of honour and trust, both in Church and State, more than any of my order in England for seventy years before. But were I assured that by my preaching I had but converted one soul to God, I should herein take more comfort than in all the honours and offices that have ever been bestowed upon me.’ See Fuller’s Church History.

ing day of universal judgment it will not be inquired what we have read, but what we have done, not how eloquently we have spoken, but how holily we have lived. He is truly learned, who has learned to abandon his own will, and do the will of God.'

The scripture statement is, *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.* This is especially important to ministers. The caution with which Henry Martyn charged himself, should not be forgotten. 'May I be taught to remember, that all other studies are merely subservient to the great work of ministering holy things to immortal souls. May the most holy works of the ministry, and those which require most devotedness of soul, be the most dear to my heart.' The practice of ministerial duties will materially call forth and aid the powers of a minister. For instance, in explaining the scriptures to his family, or among his cottagers in their dwellings, he will often find his own heart deeply affected and impressed with the enlarged and fresh views of divine truth, which God will give him, while he is doing his work.

10. WATCH AGAINST THE DANGERS OF STUDY. A student is tempted on the one hand, to an indolent, listless way of study, or to study by fits and starts, without regularity or perseverance. Or, he is seduced on the other, to neglect prior and plain duties, by an excessive love to his studies, or perhaps to pursue them to the injury of his health. There is a danger of letting lighter duties divert our minds from severer studies. The mind should be disciplined and inured to that reading which makes a strong demand on its patient attention. A man may get a passion for a complete library; a thing unattainable; for the largest libraries in the world are still destitute of rare and valuable books. One of the greatest dangers of a large library, is its tendency to induce a neglect of the Holy Scriptures, in their unaccompanied and daily study. Besides, the mass of mankind have not much time for study; a few books, well selected and well digested, make the wise man. Men who read most, are not therefore the

wisest. Men who read the best books, and make them their own by meditation and experience, are truly wise. Is there not too much indiscriminate reading, and too little meditation and experience? Shun as a plague, all works tending to excite sensual thoughts, or to defile the mind: they leave a polluting stain within, that will not easily be got rid off; they weaken the power of resistance against temptation; they often lead to total and final ruin. It is an honour to a Christian, not to be in any way acquainted with such writings as common report, or the first glance, will discover to be pernicious. Let not the corruptions of heathen classics give you their turn of mind, their sensuality, pride, and vain glory. By nothing, except it be by sense, does Satan obtain more advantage, than by pride of intellect. The Christian must cleanse himself from both. 2 Cor. vii. 1. These dangers are obvious; but there are others equally to be guarded against. Remember, that no mere knowledge will save your soul. You may know all mysteries; but, if you want charity, you will perish, notwithstanding such knowledge. Beware also of a mere scientific, controversial, or philosophical study of religion. It is an important criterion given to us by the excellent Bernard, 'In reading books, let us not look so much for science as the feeling of truth in the heart.' Dr. Buchanan, complaining of himself at college, as attending too much to science, says, 'I drink of the Cam and sip of Zion, whereas I ought to sip of the Cam and drink deep of Zion.' Many may make the complaint with more justice than he did. Beware again of despising others. We see this in that tone of cutting irony and sarcasm, joke and levity, which is the temptation of peculiar and often powerful minds, who feel their superiority over others, and thus display it, wounding them without mercy. God will not honour such methods. We must speak the truth in meekness and love.

Mere study without God's blessing, sought in prayer, and expected in faith, tends to foster evil passions, instead

of suggesting valuable and holy thoughts, and nourishing holy desires.

11. MAKE USE OF THOSE GENERAL AND OTHER MEANS WHICH GOD PRESENTS, besides that of mere books, and which are very helpful to the attainment of divine truth. Herbert, in a chapter entitled the 'Parson's Library,' tells us, that 'his library is a holy life.' An insight into our own heart, and an actual practice of all holy duties, are essential to our right knowledge of divine truths, and the effective preaching of them to others. John Smith, in his Select Sermons, says, 'To seek our divinity merely in books and writings, is to seek the living among the dead. We do but in vain seek God many times in these, where his truth too often is not so much enshrined as entombed.' Mr. Newton, in his Letters, speaking of a plan for a compendious library, recommends four comprehensive volumes, the Bible, the book of Creation, the book of Providence, and the book of the Heart. His remarks on these subjects are well worth reading. In fact, their own family and connections, their neighbourhood, and the state of the church, and of the world, when duly regarded according to the light which the Scriptures throw upon them, furnish private Christians with a striking Commentary on that holy book, and Christian ministers with the best groundwork for their public instruction. It was said of Dr. Watts, 'Whatever he took in hand, was by his incessant solicitude for souls converted into theology.'

The works of God also will furnish us with innumerable illustrations of the word of God ; the vegetable, the animal and the mineral kingdoms, may supply us with a profitable, as well as an interesting help to religious study. Bernard says, 'There is sometimes more to be found in woods than there is in books. Trees and stones will teach thee that which is not to be learned from other masters. *The heavens, too, declare the glory of God*, and all creation speaks his praise. But let us beware of resting in the mere study of outward things.' Lord Bacon quotes a striking sentiment from a platonist, as to the danger arising from

our senses—‘The sense of man carries a resemblance with the sun, which as we see opens and reveals all the terrestrial globe ; but then it again obscures and conceals the stars and celestial globe, so does the sense discover natural things, but it shuts up divine.’

The sorrows and afflictions of life are another school in which much is learned. ‘Where there is much of the cross there is much light ; where there is little of the cross there is much darkness and much folly.’ Afflictions make an experienced divine. Rollock, one of the Scotch Reformers, testified, ‘I am not ashamed to profess that I never reached to so high a pitch in the knowledge of God as I have attained in this sickness.’ Rivet, a French Protestant, on his dying bed asserted, ‘In the space of ten days since I kept my bed, I have learned more, and made greater progress in divinity, than in the whole course of my life before.’ Sickness brings us near death and eternity, dispels the glare of the world, and thus prepares us to receive in their just importance those revealed truths which we before but dimly discerned, or carelessly and with indifference regarded.

But especially, let us study the Saviour. The best result of scriptural knowledge is to know Christ. It is most beneficial to ourselves, and most useful to others. Every part of our studies should have some connection with Him. He is **THE TRUTH**, the sum and substance of all truth. If we know Christ, in the experience of His grace, and by the light of His word, and the teaching of His Spirit, we have the key of the mysteries of God’s word. The true way to spiritual light is to follow Christ ; (John viii. 12.) no learning, research, diligence, or acuteness, can avail, where this is neglected. What a blessed world would this be, if in all Christians Christ was formed the hope of glory—if we could discern the image of Christ in all and every one around us ! Franke says, ‘O blessed contemplation ! Would to God we might thus with a sedate mind, behold Christ in all others, and that we ourselves may be found a clear and lucid mirror of Him.’

12. LASTLY, EVER REMEMBER THAT GOD IS THE FATHER OF LIGHTS and the fountain of wisdom. When we lose sight of Him, it is not surprising that we wander into darkness and error. We should begin our reading, lifting up our hearts to Him for His blessing, and praying that He will both keep us from all error, and guide into all truth. To have prayed well, is to have studied well. The importance of pursuing all our studies in the spirit of prayer is very great. We may otherwise be led into errors ; puffed up with conceit ; fancy that knowledge is all ; despise our brethren, and fall into ten thousand evils. It is incredible what mischief has been done by unsanctified learning. The only remedy for this is much prayer for the enlightening, purifying, and humbling work of the Spirit in our hearts. Bishop Sanderson well remarks, (in a Sermon on 1 Cor. xii. 1.) ‘ It was Simon Magus’ error to think that the gift of God might be purchased with money ; and it has a spice of his sin, and so may go for a kind of simony, to think that spiritual gifts may be purchased with labour. You may rise up early and go to bed late, and study hard, and read much, and devour the marrow of the best authors ; and when you have done all, unless God give a blessing to your endeavours, be as lean and meagre, in regard of true and useful learning, as Pharaoh’s lean kine were after they had eaten the fat ones. It is God that both ministereth seed to the sower, and multiplieth the seed sown ; the principal and the increase are both his. If then we expect any gift, or the increase of any gift from Him, neither of which we can have without him ; let us not be behind, either with our best endeavours to use the means he has appointed, or with our faithful prayers to crave His blessing on those means.’ He says also, ‘ Prayer without study is presumption, and study without prayer is atheism.’

Luther declares, that ‘ he profited more in the knowledge of the Scriptures in a short time by private prayer, than by a long course of application without it.’ Remember, then, the unspeakable importance of fervent and daily prayer for the divine blessing on all your studies. Have a

firm conviction that God alone can make you a wise and understanding Christian, or an *able minister of the New Covenant*. We are not sufficient, with all our studies, plans, and efforts, of ourselves to attain true wisdom, or to make ourselves efficient instruments of his glory. Let us cherish a deep sense therefore of our own incapacity, and daily look to Him alone for divine teaching. He teacheth to profit. It was the pious Hervey's remark, towards the end of his life, 'Were I to enjoy Hezekiah's grant, and have fifteen years added to my days, I would be much more frequent in my supplications to a throne of grace. We sustain a mighty loss by reading so much, and praying so little.'

The end of all just study is divine illumination, to our own everlasting welfare, and that of our fellow-creatures. It was the prayer of the Apostle for his beloved Ephesian converts, that *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him :—the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints*. This is the highest result of all learning. If our studies do not lead us to know Christ; do not increase in us that knowledge, and do not help us in our efforts to make him known to others, a day will come, when they will all be found worse than vain and unprofitable: *but every man that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh to Christ*. All-important then is prayer. An hour's prayer may do more for the illumination of our minds than years of study. Every part of our studies should be, then, intermingled with ejaculatory prayer; first for right knowledge, and then for its right use.

Whatever we may have said of the value of human learning, let all be subordinate to *this* learning. May the great aim of the writer of these pages, and of every reader, be to attain *that* knowledge, which makes the possessor himself wise, and fills him with zeal to make all others also, WISE UNTO SALVATION.

CHAPTER X.

ADVICE TO A STUDENT ON ENTERING THE UNIVERSITY.

THERE is a large and important class of the community, whose case, perhaps, has not been sufficiently attended to : I mean, that of young persons, destined for the most part to fill offices of trust in the church or state, and particularly at the commencement of, or during their undergraduateship in, the University.

Whether we contemplate the tide poured in every year from our public schools, or the influx from private seminaries,—the critical period itself of human life, or the consequences pending upon the issue ;—it must be acknowledged, that of all classes, none presents a stronger claim to our consideration : none more loudly calls for that Christian counsel, which it is the aim of the present chapter to administer.

The University affords many advantages for the acquirement of useful knowledge ; for expanding and invigorating the intellectual powers, and fixing habits of application and thinking, which, through life, give address, solidity, and a tone to the character : but it cannot be denied, that in no situation is youth more critically placed ; in none has temptation a more attractive force, or is Christian principle exposed to a severer struggle. May the young be prepared for the conflict ; may temptation be disarmed of its power, by an exposure of the snares of the tempter !

In offering some hints with this view, and by regard to which the young may maintain the post of fidelity, pre-

serve the line of consistency, and avail themselves of the facilities for intellectual, with the least possible risk to their spiritual, advancement ;—the Writer gladly adopts the assumption, that his remarks are chiefly intended for, and addressed to, *Christian Students*.

The character presented to his mind is that of one whose conviction is on the side of religious principle ; but in whose case that principle has not yet been submitted to the test of any peculiar trial. It is assumed, that he has been *brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord* : and *from a child has known the Holy Scriptures*. And now the period has arrived, when removed from the vigilant eye and superintendence which controlled and guarded his minority, he is about to be launched into a sea, where his feeble bark will be assailed with fiercer storms. Though a youth of this description cannot be altogether ignorant of those difficulties and temptations to which Christians are more or less liable in all places, and under all circumstances : yet, may not some particular cautions, the fruit, partly of experience ; partly of a kind interest in his welfare, be furnished, which the Christian Student may have always at hand ; to which he may have recourse in the very moment of attack ?

Religion, indeed, as a transaction between God and the soul—as the foundation of acquaintance and reconciliation—union and converse with the Father of Spirits, is pre-eminently of divine, not human origin. Yet, since all who themselves partake of the benefit, and possess authority and influence, are laid under a solemn obligation to impart to others the means of its attainment, it is deeply to be lamented, that in any plan, or in any system of instruction, and especially where the education of the young is conducted upon so large a scale, religion itself should ever be regarded as a business rather secondary and subordinate, than primary and principal.

In the present day a conviction of this deficiency seems to be more and more sensibly felt ; and, while learning in general need suffer no depreciation, to theological study, it

may be hoped, a prominence will be assigned. Within the period of the Writer's recollection there has been a considerable and a progressive change for the better ; the earnest, perhaps, of one still more marked and decisive.

At present, however, there is reason to apprehend, that, exclusive of a required and stated attendance upon external observances, the religious advance of the Student in the university, under the divine blessing, must, after all, chiefly depend upon his own individual care and culture.

These observations will not improperly produce the following cautions, which the Writer doubts not will be received in the same spirit of candour with which they are offered.

1. CULTIVATE THE HABIT OF PERSONAL RELIGION. Far be it from the author to impede or interrupt a conscientious and diligent attention to the usual routine of academical study. He has known instances much to the dishonour of religion, and little for the real benefit of its professed advocates, when the paramount claims of religion have been alleged by the student, as a plea for dispensing with the industrious pursuits of merely literary objects. The circumstances ought to be peculiar indeed which would excuse, and much more would justify, such a deviation : it is not one ill-adapted to uphold the mischievous notion of the incompatibility of learning with piety, or the uselessness of learning to the pious.

If to a Christian student, deeply impressed with a sense of his obligation to consecrate all he is and all he has to his God and Saviour, it should at any time appear hard to employ much time and bestow much pains upon points indirectly, if at all, in their present operation connected with religion ; let him reflect that in every station there are others similarly situated, and that it would be quite as unreasonable for a scholar in the University, upon this plea, to cast off what belongs to the duty of his station there, as for the husbandman or mechanic, from the like cause, to neglect or renounce their usual occupations.

The cultivation of devotional feeling depends more upon

the spirit in which any study is taken up, and the manner in which it is pursued, than upon the study itself.

In cultivating the habit of personal religion, let the student SCRUPULOUSLY REGARD ALL ITS MORE RETIRED DUTIES. In every situation, but especially in the University, this will be indispensable. By this alone the Christian student will be able to unsecularize himself before the work of the day begins, and after it closes. Thus he will keep alive and warm in his breast the flame of devotion, and supply the want of domestic instruction.

By daily self-examination, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, by daily searching and meditating upon the scriptures, and by a devout recollection of pious absent friends, the principle of spiritual life will be kept from languishing.

In cultivating personal religion, let the student JEALOUSLY RESERVE THE SABBATH FOR ITS APPROPRIATE AND ALL-IMPORTANT AVOCATIONS. He who wishes his academical career to be marked with consistent propriety, must habitually act upon the resolution, formed and renewed in the strength of divine grace, to employ all the hours of every Sunday according to the design of that sacred institution. With the duties of the Lord's day, none of his ordinary pursuits or studies must be allowed to clash. He must no more permit himself on that day to pursue his secular attainments, than other men in ordinary stations may indulge the like freedom. Never let him plead for that in his own case, which in theirs he would instantly condemn. From this remembrance and reserve of the sabbath, he may anticipate the happiest result through each successive week, both as it respects his own peace of mind and his progress in religion. Nor will his regard to the sanctity of the sabbath want a blessing from on high, upon all his other plans and week-day employments. Let the Christian student have it ever imprinted on his mind that God Himself is the *fountain of all wisdom*, intellectual and spiritual; and that in Christ, the Master whom he acknowledges, and at whose feet he

sits, *are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Let him honour God, and he shall enjoy the benefit of the promise, Them that honour me, I will honour.*

To fix and strengthen his habit of personal religion, let the STUDENT CONDUCT HIS SECULAR STUDIES UPON CHRISTIAN MOTIVES, AND FOR A RELIGIOUS END. The law here is as unbending as it is universal, *Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* A rule, in this world's estimation, impracticable, perhaps unintelligible ; but to the Christian not more imperative than pleasant. It is as much his privilege as his interest to *acknowledge God in all his ways*, and in all he does still to tend towards Him, as the centre round which he always revolves.

The intellectual powers are improved and strengthened by exercise ; and those powers, in their highest state of cultivation, the Christian student lays under contribution, and consecrates to the service of the sanctuary. From their religious application and use, even studies unconnected with religion derive a measure of sanctity. As in common life, the Christian master rules, and the servant obeys, as the fellow-servants of Christ ; so it is the duty, and will be the wisdom of every Christian student, still to have an eye to, and a recollection of, his Master in heaven. *That piety he will find to be most practical which keeps freshest upon his mind, and most habitually in his thoughts, the sense of a present God ; which invites him to carry every difficulty, of whatever kind, to a throne of grace ; there to cast all his care, and there in every thing to make known his requests.*

Besides the care to cultivate a devotional habit, let the student, on entering the University,

2. OBSERVE A SPECIAL CAUTION IN THE CHOICE AND SELECTION OF FRIENDS. The circumstances in which so great a number of young persons are collected together, in commencing at the University, are in this view peculiarly ensnaring. Deprived of a society to which they had been accustomed, there is a mutual and almost irresistible attraction, by which those who now find themselves

bound upon the same voyage, and embarking at the same port, are drawn into contact. Yet, alas ! of this attraction how many are the hapless victims ! Insensibly they are urged along with the many ; and the event proves not merely injurious to their religious progress, but fatal to their religion.

Before he makes an equivocal choice, let the student seriously reflect how much easier it is *not to form*, than to *break* an acquaintance ; not to yield to the violent but momentary impulse, than, having yielded, to retract. Among the means to avoid improper associations, none will be found more effectual or simple, than a manly but modest avowal, in the outset, of determination to religion. ‘Show your colours,’ was the brief advice of an experienced friend, to one just approaching the scene of conflict.

It will be wise to evince early an inflexible purpose of maintaining the character of a Christian student. To observe the regulations prescribed by those in authority ; to conciliate their esteem, and win their confidence, by a respectful deference and prompt obedience ; may be regarded by the heedless and unthoughtful, as a heavy tax upon the freedom, the independence, and spirit of youth : yet such is the very course which the highest wisdom dictates, to which conscience bears its strongest testimony, and which experience always proves to be the safest. None are so harassed in the University as the vacillating and unresolved in religion ; none endure so many taunts : none are so frequently assailed, nor so much in danger of falling by temptation. It is not meant that the firm and faithful profession of religion will exempt a student from its peculiar trials : but that in proportion as the separation which it exacts is more complete, the severity of these trials will either be abated or less felt. His measure of consolation will bear a just ratio to the strength of his resolution. *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.* If there is ever a period when the inspired admonition should come with all its force, like a voice from heaven,

it is when it falls upon the ear of a Christian student, breathing an infectious atmosphere, and within the precincts of temptation. *I am a companion of all them that fear God and keep his precepts.* If ever there is a time when he will derive benefit from his congeniality with this sentiment, it is *now.* *Depart from me, ye evil-doers : I will keep the commandments of my God.* As he values all that he ought to hold precious, thus let him express both his abhorrence and his determination.

Happily, through the vast increase of religious feeling and knowledge every where, the choice here enforced and recommended, has become much more practicable. As an auxiliary to support, or a counsellor to advise ; as a sharer of his converse in his leisure, or of his confidence in his retirements : such a coadjutor in all his designs to serve God will at once double the student's joys and divide his griefs.

Nor even, when some ties which cannot be severed, may happen to connect him with others whose minds are not cast into the same mould, must he be negligent to watch the favourable moment of opportunity. Religion is in its own nature diffusive as the light, and the consistent uniform walk of the Christian is an engine of immense power, which seldom fails gradually to produce some corresponding and assimilating result. Religion in its genuine features is too lovely, not to engage the notice, and in some degree command the admiration of all its beholders ; and if you add to the force of example, the Christian's efforts and prayers, his invincible patience and steady perseverance, his discretion and prudence, his brotherly kindness and charity ; what is there which may not be anticipated ? The sphere of usefulness in the University must necessarily be contracted ; but the extent of that usefulness must not be measured by the smallness of the sphere. Supposing a Christian student to have enjoyed the invaluable blessing of a truly Christian father or preceptor, this might be alleged as a good general rule—‘ Admit not as an intimate, one whom you could not introduce to that

father or preceptor with pleasure or propriety, as *your friend*.' Much might be obviously added upon temptations of other kinds, to which in the University, and amidst so large and mixed an assemblage of the young, the student must inevitably be exposed. But in what has already been advanced, he has the antidote. Of the grosser sins of infidelity or profaneness, intemperance or sensuality, the writer would say—*Let not these things be once named among you. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather, whenever the just occasion calls for it, reprove them.*

There is, however, yet one caution which may with advantage be pressed upon the Christian student, in entering the University, and this respects—

3. THE INFLUENCE WHICH A CIRCUMSPECT OR CARELESS CONDUCT THERE, WILL NECESSARILY HAVE UPON THE WHOLE FUTURE LIFE. Many, alas ! who have trifled away the season of opportunity, and forfeited their claim to respect and notice in the University, afterwards have sunk into hopeless neglect, and too late bewailed and smarted for that error. On the contrary, it rarely happens, that those who have conducted themselves conformably to the character of Christian students, have failed to overcome, or outlive, whatever opposition their fidelity at first exposed them to ; and to conciliate the favour and regard of those whose friendship has reflected honour upon their after-life. In fine, they have usually passed into the world with an 'imprimatur,' which has given credit and currency to their undertakings ; and a bright colouring to all their future prospects.

The question is not one of commanding talents or extraordinary acquirements, but of the responsible cultivation of those talents, and the conscientious use of those means which the individual may happen to possess. *It is accepted according to what a man has.* Nor will God leave his servants destitute of such gifts, as will qualify them for the duties assigned to them in His providence, nor yet of grace, to use these gifts to His honour and glory.

If nothing is hinted upon the subject of recreations, it is because that subject has nothing in it exclusively applicable to the Christian student. Perhaps, however, it may not be irrelevant to add, that no one should restrict himself in the enjoyment of such abstraction from graver studies, and such a portion of daily exercise, as he will find to be essential to the care and preservation of his health.

The Christian student's best armour of defence against the paralyzing effects of occasional failures in the objects of his literary grasp, will be the religious principles and motives upon which he professes to act. *These* will bind him to perseverance and steadfastness in the path of duty, whether in it he reaps the fruit of success, or is pierced by the thorns of disappointment. *These* will be his ballast, against the rashness of prosperity, and a sweet alleviation to the bitterness in his cup of adversity. As a Christian student he is answerable, not for success, but for the becoming and Christian allotment and improvement of his time and opportunities.

Remembering then, from whom alone can be derived

‘The strength to suffer, and the will to serve,’

let him forcibly and repeatedly press home upon his heart, the truths here concentrated as it were in one focus, for his benefit ; though few, not on that account the less weighty, nor the less worthy of his perusal and regard.

In his care to maintain the habit of personal religion, he will secure the truest personal enjoyment. In a judicious selection of friends, he will best promote his social comfort ; and in contemplating the bearing which the present will have upon all the future, he will have, perhaps, the strongest merely human motive, to observe such a course of conduct as will cast upon that future, brightness and not obscurity ; and furnish materials for pleasing, not painful retrospection.

Christian Student ! think on these things, and the God of love and peace be with thee !

A Prayer made and used by the Lord Chancellor Bacon, with which the Christian student may occasionally excite or refresh his own, and the devotion of others :—

O ETERNAL God, and most merciful Father in Christ Jesus, in whom Thou hast made a covenant of grace and mercy with all those that come to Thee in Him : in His name and mediation we humbly prostrate ourselves before the throne of Thy mercy-seat, acknowledging that by the breach of all Thy holy laws and commandments, we have become wild olive-branches—strangers to Thy covenant of grace ; we have defaced in ourselves Thy sacred image imprinted in us by creation : we have sinned against heaven and before Thee, and are no more worthy to be called Thy children. O admit us into the place even of hired servants. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, for Thy dear Son Jesus Christ's sake, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life : in Him, O Lord, we appeal from Thy justice to Thy mercy, beseeching Thee, that in His name, and for His sake only, Thou wilt be graciously pleased freely to pardon and forgive all our sins and disobedience, whether in thought, word, or deed, committed against Thy Divine Majesty, and for His precious blood-shedding, death, and perfect obedience, free us from the guilt, the stain, the punishment, and dominion of all our sins, and clothe us with His perfect righteousness. Turn our hearts, O Lord, and we shall be turned ; convert us, and we shall be converted. Illuminate the eyes of our minds and understandings with the bright beams of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may daily grow in the saving knowledge of the heavenly mystery of our redemption ; sanctify our wills and affections by the same Spirit, the fountain of all grace and goodness ; reduce them to the obedience of Thy most holy will, in the practice of all piety toward Thee, and charity towards all men.

Inflame our hearts with Thy love ; cast forth of them what displeases Thee ; all infidelity, hardness of heart, profaneness, hypocrisy, contempt of Thy holy word and ordinances ; all uncleanness, and whatsoever advances itself in opposition to Thy holy will. And grant that henceforth, through Thy grace, we may be enabled to lead a godly, holy, sober, and Christian life, in true sincerity and uprightness of heart before Thee. To this end, plant Thy holy fear in our hearts ; grant that it may never depart from before our eyes, but continually guide our feet in Thy paths. Increase our weak faith, that it may bring forth the fruit of unfeigned repentance. By the power of the death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, may we daily die unto sin ; and by the power of His resurrection be daily quickened and

raised up to newness of life ; may we be truly born anew, and be effectually made partakers of the first resurrection, so that the second death may never have dominion over us.

Teach us, O Lord, so to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Make us ever mindful of our last end, and continually to exercise the knowledge of grace in our hearts ; that, finally, we may be translated hence to that kingdom of glory prepared for all those that love and that trust in Thee ; then and ever let Thy holy angels pitch their tents around us, and guard and defend us from the malice of Satan, and from all perils both of the soul and body.

Pardon all our unthankfulness : make us daily more and more thankful for all Thy mercies and benefits poured down upon us. Let these our humble prayers ascend to the throne of grace, and be granted, not only for these mercies, but for whatsoever else Thy wisdom knows needful for us, and for all those that are in need, misery, and distress, whom Thou, O Lord, hast afflicted in mind, body, or estate. Grant them patience and perseverance in the end, and to the end. And this, O Lord, not for any merits of ours, but for the merits of Thy Son, and our Almighty Saviour Christ Jesus, to whom, with Thee and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed all glory for ever. Amen.

Lord Bacon also wrote another prayer as follows : he entitled it

THE STUDENT'S PRAYER.

To God the Father, God the Word, God the Spirit, we pour forth most humble and hearty supplications, that He, remembering the calamities of mankind, and the pilgrimage of this our life, in which we wear out days few and evil, would please to open to us new refreshments out of the fountains of His goodness for the alleviating of our miseries. This also we humbly and earnestly beg, that human things may not prejudice such as are divine ; neither that from the unlocking of the gates of sense, and the kindling of a greater natural light, any thing of incredulity or intellectual night may arise in our minds towards divine mysteries. But rather that by our mind thoroughly cleansed and purged from fancy and vanities, and yet subject, and perfectly given up to the Divine Oracles, there may be given up unto faith, the things that are faith's. Amen.

CHAPTER XI.

OUTLINES OF THE HISTORY OF DIVINITY.

GOD has in every age raised up men who have furnished the Church with needful and valuable works, and though some of these have perished, and many are now comparatively useless, yet the writings of some authors of almost every age survive, and may be advantageously consulted by the Christian student.

Amid the almost boundless ranges of theology, without entering into minute details, some outline or hints towards an Epitome of the history of divinity, at particular periods, and in successive ages of the Church, can scarcely fail to be useful.*

At the very entrance, he would intreat the reader to remember that all the works of men are full of imperfection : that no human being can take a complete view of the whole subject ; that every judgment of man must be in

* For the history of Divinity on a fuller scale, Dupin's *Bibliotheca*, Cave's *Historia Literaria*, Walchius' *Bibliotheca*, and other more recent works may be consulted. For the history of the true Church, see Milner's *History* continued by Scott, and Weismanni *Introductio in Memorabilia Ecclesiastica Historiæ Sacræ*. The difficulties of giving a full history of Divinity are obvious, and to the Author wholly insurmountable. It requires, in order to its perfect accomplishment, an extent of reading, a soundness of judgment, and a depth of experience, to an approach to which he makes no pretensions. All that he ventures upon is to offer such remarks as his own studies have furnished or occasioned, in the hope of being serviceable to others even less experienced than himself. And he would submit these remarks with unfeigned humility and deference. He is pressed by the difficulty of giving an opinion in any way unfavourable of authors, from whom he has been glad to learn. He does not pretend to give a complete view of the subject. It would require far more time than he can afford, far more knowledge than he has acquired, far more wisdom, and judgment, and piety, than he possesses. Yet his mite, such as it is, he is unwilling to withhold from the treasury of God.

some degree defective ; and that till the great day when God will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart, no history but that which is inspired, can be without error in some things, and obscurity in others. Each age has been ready to think that it has the exact truth, and every denomination of Christians that its views are in every point defensible and scriptural.

We have shown that the Holy Scriptures are the only standard of Divine Truth ; it will be of little profit, therefore, to seek that truth in those writers, whether of Greece, or Rome, who had not the full benefit of the Sacred Volume. The work of Cicero, on the nature of the gods, shows how little light can be derived from the result of the labours of all preceding philosophers, even when brought before us by such a writer, and in such a late age of the heathen world. In this respect that work is a valuable testimony for the Christian student. Though classical literature is here a subject out of our province, it may be remarked, that the delightful use made by Leighton and other spiritual minds, of their classical attainments, shows that such attainments give to a holy and diligent mind advantages for enriching and adorning the statements of divine truth.

It will be necessary to divide the subject under different heads or classes of writers. We propose to consider therefore, in distinct sections, the Fathers, the Schoolmen, the Reformers, their Successors, the Nonconformists, the Divines at the Restoration and Revolution, and those of Modern Times.

SECTION I.

THE FATHERS.

The title of Fathers is variously extended or limited, and is made to include by some, only writers to the fourth

or fifth century ; and by others, writers to the twelfth or thirteenth. We would here take it in its largest acceptation.

We have but few remains of the first ages of the church ; as it has been beautifully remarked, ‘ to believe, to suffer, to love,—not to write, was the primitive taste.’ Yet those remains which we have, are too valuable to be neglected. Milner, one well competent to judge, observes, ‘ Ecclesiastical antiquity has been too much depreciated in our times, and students in divinity have been discouraged from the study of the Fathers. In truth, a selection of them ought to be made : to praise or dispraise the primitive writers in general, is obviously absurd.’ *

It is a sad mistake to give the Fathers a kind of divine authority, of which their often fanciful interpretation of the scriptures, and grossly contradictory explanations, renders them unworthy. The Hon. Robert Boyle justly observes of them, ‘ Generally they were worthy men, and highly to be regarded as the grand witnesses of the doctrines and government of the Ancient Churches ; most of them very pious, many of them very eloquent, and some of them (especially the two critics, Origen and Jerome) very learned ; yet so few of the Greek Fathers were skilled in Hebrew, and so few of the Latin Fathers either in Hebrew or Greek, that many of their homilies, and even comments, leave hard texts as obscure as they found them ; and sometimes, misled by bad translations, they give them senses exceeding wide of the true. So that many times in their

* Attention to the Fathers has been much revived ; chiefly through the Tractarian School. The author sees little to alter in what he had written several years before the rise of that school.

Archbishop Usher’s advice to young students was, ‘ not to spend too much time in Epitomes, but to set themselves to read the ancient authors themselves ; to begin with the Fathers, and to read them according to the ages in which they lived (which was the method he had taken himself), and, together with them, carefully to pursue the Church historians that treated of that age in which those Fathers lived ; by which means the student would be better able to perceive the reason and meaning of passages in their writings, which would otherwise be obscure, when he knew the original and growth of those heresies and heterodox opinions they wrote against ; and might also better judge what doctrines, ceremonies and opinions prevailed in the Church in every age, and by what means introduced.’—Parr’s Life, p. 97.

The reading of the early historians of the Church, and the best subsequent histories, is more practicable than following Usher in his gigantic theological studies.

writings they appear to be far better divines than commentators, and in an excellent discourse upon a text you will find but a very poor exposition of it.'

The sentiments of our Reformers on the Fathers are worth recording. When Bishop Cox, in 1562, heard of Queen Elizabeth's studying them, he wrote to Cecil, her secretary. 'When all was done, the scripture is that that pierceth. Chrysostom and the Greek Fathers Pelagianizant (favour Pelagius) sometimes Bernard monachizat (is for monkery); and he trusted her grace meddled with them but at spare hours.'—Strype's Annals, Vol. i. 541.

Bishop Jewell, in reply to Harding, shows that Ambrose quoted the preceding Fathers, not as grounds, or principles, or foundations of the faith; but only as interpreters, or witnesses, or consenters to the faith, which Protestants never denied.

In the canons of the Church of England, passed in 1571, is a charge (see Sparrow's collection, p. 237.) that 'preachers teach nothing to be religiously held by the people, except that which is agreeable to the doctrine of both Testaments, and what has been deduced from that very doctrine by the catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops.' This canon has no binding authority on us now, but it shows that our Church in that day thought this study of importance.

Witsius speaks of the Fathers in his usual spirit of Christian love and wisdom: I 'am not pleased to discuss their errors with severity, which I see is the manner of some writers now, who labour with so mad an itch and so varied an outcry of condemnation, that they defile their paper on every occasion, and even without occasion, with the faults of the Fathers. I think that that reverence is due to the Fathers of the Church, eminently merited by their diligence, zeal, and example, that we should pass by their blemishes in their other virtues. At the same time, it is not to be dissembled, that they have often unhappily discussed things of the greatest moment, and frequently admit expressions which, unless softened by the most kind interpretation, give a very hard sense.'

Dr. Chalmers, in his sermon on the respect due to antiquity, adopting Lord Bacon's sentiment, that the time in which we now live is the ancient time, yet happily discriminates, by showing that 'as we are only wiser because of the now larger book of experience which is in our hands, we are not so to scorn antiquity as to cast that book away from us: but we are to learn from antiquity, by giving that book our most assiduous perusal, while at the same time we sit in the exercise of our free and independent judgment over its contents.' *

The Author has selected these observations of others because his own studies do not justify him in saying much on this section. As far as they have gone, he is disposed to consider that Christian students would find it profitable to read the Fathers more than is now ordinarily done. Daillé, in his treatise on their right use; Barbeyrac on their morals; Whitby, in his book on their interpretation of the scriptures; Edwards, in his *Patrologia*; and Taylor, in his *Ancient Christianity*; have abundantly shown their failings and contradictions; and notwithstanding Scrivener, Reeves, and others, have attempted to answer

* It would be easy to enlarge this section, by useful quotations from others; but the Author would rather add references to the original works. At the end of Melancthon's Exposition on the 14th of the Romans, he gives some important and valuable remarks upon the respective Fathers, under the head, 'De Ecclesiasticis Scriptoribus Vetustis.'¹ He dwells on Origen, Dionysius, Tertullian, Cyprian, Basil, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory. Luther's View of the Fathers, in his own strongest style (if we may receive the Table Talk as conveying his just sentiments), is worth referring to. See chap. xxvi. and xxix. of that work. Some discriminating views of the style and character of the Fathers are given by Erasmus in his *Epistles*, Lib. xxviii. pp. 1148, 1149; though we should not look to him for just views of writers on doctrinal subjects. Some useful hints from different authors, are gathered together by Leigh, in his *Body of Divinity*, pp. 112—114. He quotes extracts from Erasmus' *Epistles*. Bishop Wilkins gives Erasmus' character of the Fathers, in his *Gift of Preaching*, p. 124. Jewell's Defence of his *Apology*, pp. 59—64, is also well worth consulting. He shows the opinions which the Fathers entertained of each other, to confute the vain pretensions of the Romanists, who would ascribe to them an undue authority in matters of faith. Luther says, 'Austin always has had the pre-eminence, the second in esteem was Ambrose, Bernard the third. When Bernard preaches, then he is above all the teachers, but when he disputes, then he is altogether another man: there he gives too much to the precept and free will. Cyril has the best sentences. Theophylact is the best expounder of St. Paul.'

¹ See his Works, Vol. iii. pp. 1052—1075.

Daillé,—it has been sufficiently proved how incompetent their writings are to form an unerring rule of judgment respecting divine truth. Have they not been studied rather controversially than practically, and thence the study may have comparatively been unfruitful as to real edification ! Milner has led us to a better plan of reading them. Their testimony to the Holy Scriptures has been elaborately displayed by Lardner ; and that of the Ante-Nicene Fathers to the divinity of Christ, by Bull, Burton, and Faber. Their evidence, from age to age, in favour of the main truths of the gospel, is of great importance, and especially their testimony on the Socinian controversy ; and their deeply serious views of spiritual and eternal things, cannot be read without profit. Yet, as critics on the sacred text, they are inferior to writers since the Reformation ; and, as final judges of divine truth, or as having any traditional authority to decide scriptural obscurities, they must be utterly renounced. Even from the beginning, *false philosophy* (Col. ii. 8.) began to corrupt the church. An Usher might read the whole body of the Fathers with profit ; but unless, as in his case, there be a special reason for doing so, there would be no adequate advantage, and many disadvantages in so extensive a study. Milner, in a private letter to Newton in 1771, says, ‘ there were some very great Christians among them, though most of them mixed gospel truths with strange whimsies. The mixture of Platonism with the gospel was a great evil.’

Little need be added respecting individual Fathers. The Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, and the Epistles of Ignatius, are beautiful specimens and remnants of Christian antiquity.

Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Cyprian, Chrysostom, Athanasius, and Augustine, shine as splendid lights in the early centuries. Their answers to the heathen of their day furnish us with ample materials for meeting the sophistries of infidels and heathen nations in our own times.

Men of the learning of Justin and Tertullian were doubtless used as important means of furthering the gospel

by their character, as men of superior understanding, and therefore not easily deluded, as well as by their treatises. To see them humbling themselves before the gospel, despising their former notions, and strenuously counteracting their influence, not only by their profession, but by their defences of this new faith, must have had a prodigious influence. Though it seemed right that the gospel should be introduced to the world by poor and illiterate men, (1 Cor. i. 26—29,) yet in its further advancement, in resisting the subtlety as well as malice of its enemies, it should avail itself of the best human help, of wisdom and learning, under the influence of divine blessing, to assail its adversaries with their own misdirected weapons.

Jerome's and Origen's invaluable labours in the restoration, preservation, and handing down to us the pure text of the word of God must not be overlooked ; to their revisions and translations of that word how much we are now indebted for that invaluable gift the Holy Scriptures.

The Author has been delighted with the little which he has read of Chrysostom and Augustine. The opening out of Scripture in Chrysostom is very instructive, and the humility, devotion, and unction of Augustine, and the acute, lucid, and happy way in which he meets his objectors ; and the heavenly wisdom (James iii. 17.) running through his remarks, will always, notwithstanding the excess of allegorical interpretation and the defect of a clear statement of justification, make his writings valuable.

There are, in the voluminous works of the Fathers, many treatises that may be separately read with considerable advantage. Such as Justin Martyr's and Tertullian's Apologies, Cyprian's Letters, Augustine's Confessions, his City of God and Treatises against the Pelagians, Origen's work against Celsus, Gregory's Pastor, Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, and many delightfully devotional treatises in Bernard. Bernard abundantly repays perusal.

The clear view of Justification may be seen in the following extract of the Epistle to Diognetus—' He gave his Son a ransom for us ; the holy for the transgressors, the

good for the evil, the just for the unjust, the incorruptible for the corrupt, the immortal for the mortals. For what else could cover our sins but his righteousness? In whom else could we, the unjust and the impious, be accounted righteous, but in the Son of God only? O the sweet exchange! O the unsearchable contrivance! O the unexpected benefits, that the iniquity of many should be hid in a righteous one, and that the righteousness of one should justify many who were unjust.*

Chrysostom held the same doctrine distinctly, showing in the case of Abraham, (in his 2nd Hom. on the Epistle to the Romans) that works of faith do not justify before God. 'The Apostle means to show that even Abraham was justified by faith; in which indeed there is the excellence of a mighty victory; for it is not indeed unlikely that one who has no good works should be justified by faith, but that a man adorned with beauteous deeds, should be just not thence, but from faith, is truly wonderful.' Abraham was indeed, as it regards the evidence of justification, justified by works; but as it regards the reason of his justification before God, it was simply from Divine grace through faith, as Chrysostom shows.

Chrysostom's work on the priesthood is valuable for the continual sentiments it brings before us of deep-toned responsibility in reference to the ministry, though not for its clear evangelical views. His Homilies also are excellent specimens of popular expository preaching, and often much open out and illustrate the fulness of Scripture.

Though we have gladly inserted the quotations just recited of decided statement of evangelical truth, yet the works of the Fathers do not, if the Author, with very limited information, may express an opinion, like the works of the Reformers, abound with such statements; and it must be admitted that there are many statements from which the Romanists have strengthened themselves

* See Justin Martyr's Works. Ed. Paris. fo. 1742. Some doubts have been raised whether the Epistle be his. Dupin considers it to be so, without certainly affirming it.

in their errors. Milner thought that the doctrine of justification by faith was never fully and clearly exhibited to the church after the apostolic age until the days of Luther. Augustine, one of the most evangelical of the Fathers, frequently confounded justification and sanctification.* Yet this doctrine was never wholly lost.

The works of the Fathers contain many commentaries on the scriptures: information respecting their character will be found in Mr. Conybeare's Lectures. Allegorical interpretation, begun by Clemens, after Philo Judæus, and continued by Origen and those who succeeded him, was carried to such an excess as to render them very unsound interpreters of scripture. Jerome is more free from this excess than Augustine and several of the preceding Fathers, but errs on the other side, and as Luther says, 'studiously endeavours to draw every thing to a merely historical reading.' Mr. Conybeare says of Augustine, 'His critical defects are obvious and glaring, but he who is insensible to the beauty, the piety, and the devotion, and spiritual feeling which are to be found in almost every page of his Commentary, must be, to say no more, both uncandid and fastidious.' Luther certainly preferred his expositions to those of Jerome.†

Nicholas de Lyra, who flourished at the beginning of the 14th century, led the way to a more correct interpretation of scripture. Luther acknowledged himself much indebted to him.

The Pelagian Controversy was very important, as illustrating the doctrine of sanctification. The sentiments of Pelagius (who was a Welsh monk, and whose real name was Morgan,) may be gathered from the Fathers. He denied original sin, and, allowing external grace to excite our endeavours, denied the internal work of the Spirit, and conceived good works to be meritorious, and perfection

* See Milner, Vol. iii. p. 9. 462, 463.

† Conybeare's Lectures, 182. See also Milner, Vol. ii. p. 438. Vol. iv. 330. Latus de Pelagianis, Jansenius, Augustine, and Usher, *Historia Gotechalci*, contain much valuable information respecting this departure from the gospel. Vossius has been considered by some too partial to the Pelagians.

attainable. Pelagius's own expression is, 'in all there is free-will by nature, but in Christians alone it is helped by grace.' Semi-Pelagianism afterwards arose; its language is, 'though man cannot persevere in virtue without Divine grace, yet he can turn himself first to God.'* Milner has some excellent remarks in the passages referred to, on the subtilty of Satan in introducing this heresy at this time, and the wisdom of God in raising up Augustine as a scourge to it, so that it was 'eventually one of the grand means of introducing juster views of gospel grace than had for a long time obtained in the church, and of reviving Christian truth, humility, and piety.'†

As in the spiritual man there is the flesh and the spirit, so in the Fathers we may discern a mixture of the mystery of iniquity and of zeal for truth. He who knows his own heart, will not be surprised that the leaven should thus mingle with the meal.

As we depart from the apostolic age, the church, while it was visibly extended, departed, as the prophecies of Revelation lead us to expect, from evangelical simplicity. Dr. Prideaux, in his address to the reader prefixed to his *Life of Mahomet*, says, 'The churches in the East having drawn the abstrusest niceties into controversy, did thereby so destroy peace, love, and charity from among them . . . that they lost the whole substance of their religion, and . . . in a manner drove Christianity quite out of the world by those very controversies in which they disputed with each other about it. So that . . . the Saracens taking advantage of the weakness of power, and distractions of counsels which those divisions had caused, soon overran, with terrible devastation, all the Eastern Provinces of the Roman empire; . . . turned every where their churches into mosques, and . . . forced on them the abominable imposture of Mahometanism.'—Pp. vii. viii.

* See Milner's *History of the Church of Christ*, Vol. ii. p. 368—389.

† The four first seals of the Apocalyptic vision contain a striking view of the History of the *Church* in this period. Durham, Vitringa, and Dean Woodhouse apply them to the Christian Church, rather than to the Roman Empire.

Nothing can be more painful than the interminable and fierce conflicts on the veriest trifles which divided large parties of the professing Christian Church. A heathen author, probably exaggerating the actual state of things, says, 'the hatred of Christians to each other exceeded the fury of wild beasts against men.' God had His own servants in the midst of those days, but it was only His special mercy and faithfulness to His promises (Matt. xvi. 18.) that preserved a church amidst such unchristian controversies. As might be expected, amidst such a general decay of piety, not many works worth studying have come down to us from the sixth to the fifteenth century. Bede, Bertram, Theophylact, and Bernard, are among the most useful writers in that period.

The titles of the centuries before the Reformation, given by Cave, are very significative of the state of divinity in each age :—

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|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Apostolic. | 9. Photian. |
| 2. Gnostic. | 10. Obscure. |
| 3. Novatian. | 11. Hildebrandine. |
| 4. Arian. | 12. Waldensian. |
| 5. Nestorian. | 13. Scholastic. |
| 6. Eutylian. | 14. Wickliffite. |
| 7. Monothelite. | 15. Synodal. |
| 8. Eiconoclastic. | 16. Reformed.* |

* Some of the writings of the Fathers have been translated into English. It would be a useful and acceptable work for British Christians, if the most correct of these translations, and fresh translations of works that might be edifying, which have not yet been translated, were published in ten or twelve volumes octavo.—And if the most valuable extracts from the original Fathers, with English translations, were published in a similar number of volumes, it would be a very useful work to students in divinity. When the Fathers were more studied, two useful books were published, *Sculteti Medulla Patrum*, containing an analysis of the Fathers, chiefly of the first three centuries; and *Rouse's Mella Patrum*, containing extracts from their writings. The student will find these works give a good general view of what may be met with in the Fathers whom these writers notice. *Le Nourry's Apparatus*, and *Walchii Bibliotheca Patristica*, give full accounts of what concerns the Fathers, and *Dupin's Bibliotheca* has considerable abridgments of most of their works.

SECTION II.

THE SCHOOLMEN, AND THEIR CONTEMPORARIES.

It will be seen that the thirteenth century is called Scholastic by Cave, and little indeed of direct real good seems to have been effected by the mere Schoolmen.* As they once, however, occupied a leading position in divinity, and valuable writers lived in their times, we will give some testimony to the character of the schoolmen and contemporary writers.

Of the schoolmen Luther says, 'They did nothing but propose paradoxes ; their whole art was founded in a contempt for scripture : and here I know the truth of what I say, for I was brought up among them.' There are some other striking views of the school divinity in his *Colloquia Mensalia*. See chap. 1 and 30.

Leighton observes in his address to students, 'That you may not be imposed upon by the common reputation of acuteness and learning, I confidently affirm, that to understand and be master of those trifling disputes that prevail in the schools, is an evidence of a very mean understanding ; while, on the contrary, it is an argument of a genius truly great, entirely to slight and despise them, and to walk in the light of pure and peaceable truth, which is far above the dark and cloudy region of controversial disputes.'

Usher said of the schoolmen, 'They were good to puzzle men's heads with unnecessary doubts, but bunglers in resolving them ; and that their writings had done more mischief to the church, than brought advantage either to learning or religion ; that they might serve for controversial disputes in the schools, but were very improper for the pulpit, and altogether useless for the functions of civil

* See Milner's account of the School Divinity, in his *Hist. of the Church*, Vol. iv. p. 108.

life.' Bishop Wilkins gives similar views in his *Gift of Preaching*.

Rainoldes thus addresses Hart respecting the schoolmen : ' The schoolmen are the men that most uphold Papistry with the friendly help of the canonists their brethren. The Scriptures and Fathers would be pretended for a show to countenance the matter. But they are like to images in old buildings of antique work, which are framed so that with their shoulders they seem to bear the roof, whereas that indeed rests on walls or pillars. The schoolmen and canonists, the fountains of the corruptions which have infected the church of Christ ; the schoolmen in doctrine by the opinions of popery ; the canonists in discipline by the state of the papacy ; the schoolmen and the canonists are the two pillars that uphold your church as the house of Dagon, in which the Philistines triumph, and insult over the faith and God of Samson.'—P. 72.

After such testimonies, little need be added here. The philosophy of Aristotle was introduced into divinity. Lombard, Bishop of Paris, to remedy this, made a collection of passages out of the Fathers, entitled the *Book of Sentences* ; there is much truth in it, but the scholastic writers, by their commentaries upon it, only made it the means of introducing afresh the endless questions of scholastic theology.

Bonaventura and Aquinas, styled by their admirers, the seraphic and angelical doctors, were the most famous writers of this class. Luther says, Bonaventura is the best among all the school divines and church writers. Estius's *Sum* is said to contain the best account of the scholastic divinity. Colet's opinion of Aquinas is worth recording. Speaking to Erasmus, who had been praising that school divine, he said, ' Why are you so fond of commending that schoolman, who, without a great deal of arrogance, could never have reduced all things into such positive and dogmatical definitions ; and without too much of a worldly spirit, he could never have so much corrupted and defiled the pure doctrines of the gospel with his mixture of profane philosophy ? '

Dark, indeed, was the state of divinity at the commencement of the Reformation. Yet, through Divine mercy, even those dark ages were not left wholly without scriptural writers. Bradwardine, Wickliffe, Huss, and Jerome, diffused some rays of evangelical light through the darkness.

Bradwardine and Wickliffe were British Divines. Bradwardine speaks with much grief of the general departure from the doctrine of free grace, and compares it to that of the four hundred and fifty false prophets united against one. He says, 'How many indeed in our times despise thy saving grace, and contend that free-will is sufficient for salvation ; or if they use the term grace, either use it perfunctorily as a pretence, or boast that they deserve it by the strength of their free-will.' He speaks afterwards of almost the whole world as having thus gone into the error of Pelagius. See the Preface to his 'Causa Dei.' Of this, his great work, Milner gives a full account. It is a surprising work for the age in which it appeared.

Wickliffe's life and sentiments have been recently more fully investigated. He distinctly held justification by faith only. He speaks thus : 'The merit of Christ is sufficient of itself to redeem every man from hell. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is sufficient for salvation. We are not to seek to be justified in any other way than by his justice. We become righteous through the participation of his righteousness.'* Wickliffe's Translation of the Bible, with prefaces and arguments to each book ; and the hundred volumes (and more,) that he wrote against Antichrist and the Church of Rome, were, doubtless, important preparatory steps to the Reformation. In his book, entitled 'The Pathway to perfect knowledge,' he tells us what pains he had taken in translating the Bible into English—how he had got many old Latin Bibles, 'for the late books,' said he, 'are very corrupt. He employed many learned men to assist him in the fourth translation. He taught that the

* See Birkbeck's Protestant Evidence, and Dr. James' Apology for Wickliffe.

truths of the gospel suffice to salvation, without observing the legal ceremonies. He urged all classes to study the Scriptures, especially the New Testament, which, he says, 'is full of authority, and gives instructions to the simple, especially on all points needful to salvation.' *

The discovery of printing, about the middle of the 15th Century, gave a vast impulse to all literature. Mr. Hallam observes that 'the earliest printed book properly so called, is generally believed to be the Latin Bible, commonly called the Mazarin Bible.' He gives 1455 as the date of its appearance. It was truly delightful that this noble art should be thus consecrated.

Thomas á Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* is supposed to have been published about 1470, and to have gone through 1800 editions, the largest number of any book except the bible.

The writings of Wesselus of Groningen, who died in 1489, were published in one volume, 4to., in 1614. They appear, from Luther and Milner's account, to be eminently evangelical. In our own country also, Dean Colet went many preparatory steps toward reformation, in Henry the Seventh's and Henry the Eighth's reigns, not only by promoting literature, but also by throwing a just slight on the School Divines, and bringing the Scriptures freely before the people in his ministry, as the only fountain of Christian wisdom. He could not go far in error, one of whose precepts was, 'Call often for the grace of the Holy Ghost.' In the statutes of St. Paul's School he directs, that Christian authors, such as Lactantius, Prudentius, Jerome, Ambrose, and Austin, should be read along with the best classics.

Indeed, on the revival of literature, before the Reformation, Augustine's '*City of God*' was expounded in the University of Oxford to a large auditory.† Several of the

* See Clark's *Lives*, p. 109, and Milner, Vol. iv. pp. 153, 154, and Appendix.

† Would not that fine monument of human genius and piety be still a happy corrective to the injurious tendency of Heathen Classics? Is not our system of education now far too exclusively classical? and may not some of the national sins of our country, our pride and love of earthly glory and national aggrandizement, be attributable to this cause.

works published in the reign of Henry the Eighth, before the Reformation was fairly established, mark the struggles between light and darkness. The Primer of Henry the Eighth, in English, contains many admirable prayers ; and the alterations in its numerous editions attest the gradual growth of a purer doctrine. The Articles of Religion in 1536, and the Institutions of a Christian Man in 1537, though mixed with much Popish doctrine, mark the same growth ; though the influence of Gardiner, in the preparation of the Necessary Erudition, published in 1543, rendered that less pure than the former works,* and on Edward's accession it was no longer circulated by authority : yet all these works show that light was winning its way through the darkness, and the dawn of a better time was already apparent.

SECTION III.

THE REFORMERS.

The sixteenth century introduces us to the wonderful display of divine grace in the GLORIOUS REFORMATION. It was a real Reformation—a return to God on the purifying principles of his own word. It was one of the mercies of that era, that it was the revival of literature, particularly in the knowledge of the original language of Scripture. The discovery of printing amazingly facilitated the diffusion of divine truth, and in consequence, the revival of religion. Men of learning were very generally men of God, and gave in the reformed churches the tone of religion to the course of study in universities and seminaries. Learning was more exclusively religious then, than at any subsequent time, and writers on general subjects, who incidentally mention

* Bishop Tanner in his *Bibliotheca*, p. 309, ascribes the Erudition to Gardiner as the principal composer.—Cranmer's objections to, and Annotations on the Necessary Erudition are given in the *Fathers of the Church*, Vol. III. p. 71—112.—Bishop Lloyd has edited the *Formularies of Faith*, set forth in the reign of Henry the Eighth.

religion, were generally correct in doctrine. Would that this could be said now !

It is an era that calls for close attention and diligent study. ' The original writers and the historians of that age will amply repay all our researches. They will both edify the heart, and fortify us against almost every modern as well as ancient error. The poet, Cowper, writes to a relation respecting his studies, ' Let your divinity, if I may advise you, be the divinity of the glorious Reformation. I mean in contradistinction to Arminianism, and all the *isms* that were ever broached in this world of error and ignorance. The divinity of the Reformation is called Calvinism, but injuriously ; it has been that of the Church of Christ in all ages ; it is the divinity of St. Paul, and of St. Paul's master, who met him in his way to Damascus.' In this view the author fully concurs ; and he feels it the more important to press the subject, as the Reformers have been either disparaged or neglected by modern writers.

To shew that the Reformers have been neglected, we need only look at the list of books recommended in the lists of Dr. Wotton, Bishops Cleaver, Watson,* and Tomline, Dr. Williams, and Dr. Doddridge. Bishops Cleaver and Tomline almost wholly leave them out. Dr. Williams, in his *Christian Preacher*, has very little noticed them. Even Doddridge, who enters at some length into different schools of divinity, entirely forgets this school. To say nothing of foreign Reformers, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Zuinglius, Martyr, and Bucer, he mentions not our own Jewell, Latimer, Cranmer, Nowell, Foxe, Willet, Hooker, Perkins, &c. Though he gives generally just and discriminating characters of subsequent writers, the more scriptural school of the Reformation is wholly omitted. The departure from their principles produced a neglect of

* Bishop Watson, after mentioning the works of Episcopius, Curcellæus, and Limborch, says, ' After the works of these three Foreigners I would have added, but for fear of swelling the Catalogue, those of Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, and Zuinglius,' &c. It is painful thus to see our best Reformers placed after such inferior men.

their writings in previous days, and this made them scarce and dear ; and hence, probably, some of these writers omitted them, but this very omission tended to increase the disregard to them. The Church of Christ, and the Church of England, as a pure part of that Church, have materially suffered from this neglect.

But they have not only been neglected, but also disparaged. Speaking on the subject of the Divine decrees, a late dignitary of our Church, while commending our own Reformers, says, ‘ The foreign ones, Zuingle, Calvin, and Luther were men of more zeal than judgment. The very expression,—good works, conveyed so unchristian a sound to their ears, that in guarding against it they thought the doctrine of divine agency could not possibly be carried too far. In their pious zeal for the honour of God they established what Dr. Balguy truly, though perhaps coarsely, calls, A SYSTEM OF NONSENSE.’ To describe their sentiments even on the Divine decrees, as a system of nonsense, appears to the author but exemplifying the words of the Apostle : *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ;* and the general view thus given of the Reformers is erroneous and unfounded.

However the art of writing or reasoning on human literature and science may have been improved, we may well return to the Reformers for scriptural theology. Unlike other sciences, divinity, derived not from human research, but from the word of God, revealed and applied by the Holy Ghost, is more pure in its first source, and is revived as men apply simply to that source, and becomes corrupted and tainted in the various channels through which it may afterwards pass. We are persuaded that pure evangelical truth, in its native vigour and unction, will be much more readily found in either Luther or Calvin, than in the argumentative and reasoned-out Arminianism of Episcopius and Limborch, or even than in the refined system of the excellent Turretin, the study of whose works are by some, recommended in the place of the Reformers.

The more the Author has read of the writings of the Reformers, whether of our own or other countries, the more he is fully disposed, making allowances for an ancient dress, and some errors of the times, to agree with those who think that they were eminently scriptural in their sentiments and statements. They are less systematic, and more experimental ; less theoretic, and more practical, on Christian principles ; they are more consistent in doctrine, and more useful in application, than many of their successors. Their standard of divinity is of a high, and sound, and generally uniform character. Those who are supposed by some to have improved theology, have, in the author's opinion, really lowered the tone of divine truth.*

The Reformation, being carried on by human agents, had doubtless its defects. The true spirit of toleration was so little known, that the martyr Cranmer was accessory to the burning of two who denied important doctrines ; and Calvin and Melancthon cannot be cleared from an approval of the burning of Servetus. They seem too anxious often to have the authority of the earlier Fathers : and Luther's failures in the sacramental controversy are well

* He is happy to support these sentiments by the following observations of the excellent Joseph Milner.

'It seems to be commonly believed that there is a natural and gradual progression in religious knowledge, as in all human hearts and sciences, that each age must necessarily be wiser than that which preceded it ; that the era of the Reformation was only the infancy of theology ; that great improvements were made by the divines of the seventeenth century ; but that the eighteenth century bids fair for advancing the science to perfection, on account of the labours of certain ingenious and philosophical persons, who hope to emancipate it from the fetters of scholastic jargon, and fix it on the solid foundation of reason and truth.'

After admitting the improvement of natural science, through experience, and stating that this very experience is despised in religion, he goes on : 'Nor is this all ; the success of religion does not ultimately depend on human powers and resources ; the influence of the Holy Spirit is the great cause in this subject : as that is poured out, or withheld, religion will prosper or decay. . . . In the effusions of the Spirit of God, the lustre, power, and energy of Christianity appear. Hence the genuine nature and effects of true religion may be estimated with sufficient accuracy, the degree of the declensions of other periods may be measured, and the quantity of sound religion may be ascertained.'*

* See Milner's Tracts, p. 297, 298.

known. The want of a missionary spirit was one of the defects of the Reformation. Both Jew and Gentile could say, *No man careth for my soul*. Their work with the Papists, and the full employment with which it furnished them, was a palliative of this, rather than a full exculpation for the almost total neglect of a positive command : Mark xvi. 15. Yet efforts were made ; under the influence of Admiral de Coligni and Calvin, a body of the faithful went from Geneva, in September, 1556, to South America, in the hope of establishing the doctrines of the Reformation on that extensive continent, and of introducing them among the heathen ; but the primary design was to secure an asylum to the Reformed from persecution in Europe. The attempt failed of success. Another effort was made in Lapland, 1559. But the missionary spirit was not dominant in the Reformation, as in the primitive Church. In these, and other things, God has shown us that we cannot glory in men, but must ascribe the immense blessings, which the Reformation brought, only to His grace.

The work of the Reformers was not, as it has been noticed, like the work of the Apostles, introducing a fresh and original body of religious truth ; but the removing of all those massive obstructions, under which the truth that had been given us was buried and lost, and placing the recovered light on a candlestick, that it might *give light to all in the house*. Their great principles were the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures over the mind and conscience ; the doctrine of free salvation by Christ, and the responsibility of every human being to God, and to God only, as the ultimate judge, for his faith and conduct ; and thence the paramount duty of each one exercising his own judgment on the divine records, and drawing his own sentiments from them.

God showed on an illustrious scale the POWER OF SIMPLE FAITH IN HIS WORD, to break through all kinds of impediments and obstructions, which for a thousand years the great enemy had been casting round that word. The Reformers lived by faith on that word, and, sustained by

hopes realized through faith, (Heb. xi.) they endured the conflict, and attained the crown.

The time of the commencement of the Reformation was peculiarly favourable for the display of the divine power. Popery probably was at its zenith under the pontificate of Leo X. Upon the first disclosure of Luther's convictions, a learned man is said to have confessed that it was the truth, but it was no use for him to adventure for it, when nothing was left but retirement, and to pray *miserere mei*. Europe (at least the great states) enjoyed a time of peace, and therefore the voice of the gospel was more distinctly heard, than it would have been amid the voice of war.

It was not an arm of flesh that accomplished this work. An Augustine monk, trusting in Jehovah alone, commenced it. The Pope reigned over Christendom. The Papists filled every benefice. The Reformers had no human power to conquer their enemies. They simply proclaimed the Gospel of Christ, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, error and superstition fell before them.

It was a merciful providence that the very elements of our national constitution in England were imbued at the Reformation with the principles of the gospel. Our coronation service is throughout evangelical. Our king is acknowledged to reign by the grace of God. Our Houses of Parliament, our Colleges, our elder Grammar-schools, and our Assizes, commence their proceedings with prayer. Our indentures, our writs, our bills of lading, all in form acknowledge God. Our coats of arms have generally Christian mottos. Our ancient wills have all a pious commencement. The whole land is divided into parishes, and every parish has its appointed teacher. Christianity is a part of our laws and has a national establishment and public maintenance. We have thus the complete framework of a *chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people*. Alas ! that it should now have become so generally only the frame-work !

Even works on general science were written in a religious spirit. Holinshed thus closes his history : ' We

beseech God to increase the multitude of loyal subjects, to make them strong in faith towards him, and in love one with another ; that the gospel, which is the doctrine of pacification and obedience, may be glorified in the Commonwealth of England ; a corner of the world, O Lord, which thou hast singled out for the magnifying of thy majesty ; and whereof we pray thee give us a daily remembrance : so shall we make conscience of sin, and addict ourselves to the exercises of righteousness.' The great Lord Bacon touches on religion in an Evangelical spirit. Lord Coke closes the preface to his great work with an acknowledgment of his weakness and want of judgment, and a prayer for wisdom from the Father of mercies.

A thorough knowledge of the principles, theology, and history of the Reformation, is of great importance in many points of view. The protestant church derives its religious views only from the scriptures : yet we owe this important principle, and therefore much of our present spiritual knowledge, to the Reformers who, under God, removed the errors and superstitions that had been growing for centuries. We shall better understand our present privileges, and the nature and full value of our principles, by seeing with what difficulty they were attained and secured. The contest with popery is by no means yet terminated, either in our own or in foreign countries. The doctrines of the Reformation, or rather scriptural truths, have yet to vanquish and overthrow the errors of Rome through a great part of the continent, and errors in many respects similar, through the Greek and Eastern churches.

The difficulties of the times at that period of the Reformation, even when better principles did not, obliged the Protestant governments to fix the most able and approved Divines in places of power and influence ; and happily such men had been prepared, manifested, and proved by previous difficulties. We see this in the persecutions of Henry the 8th's reign, before King Edward, and of Mary's reign before Elizabeth. The advantage of

this was immense. No school is more beneficial than the school of suffering, to lead men to those principles of religion which are vital and influential.

Who can tell too the blessing of the sufferings and martyrdoms, in Queen Mary's reign? They have given us an instinctive dread of popery which we trust will never be eradicated, till that mother of abominations be utterly consumed. Never did the great enemy more effectually weaken his own power. Their death endeared their memory to every Briton; it threw a halo of sanctity around their doctrines, of which we feel the benefit to the present hour. The schools and charities which they established still bless the land. *

It has been observed that the most comforting, cheering, and edifying of St. Paul's Epistles were those written during his imprisonment; and the same remark applies to the writings of the Reformers. The letters written in prison, the examination of the confessors, and the treatises which they then sent forth, are full of unction. There is a savour of religion about them which we cannot easily find any where else. The times of the Reformers, their dangers, difficulties, and sufferings, seem requisite to raise up the spirit of Reformers.

May it not have been from their sufferings that in the Articles, the Homilies, and the Liturgy of the Church of England, our Reformers dwell so much on the main and simple truths of the gospel? At the same time, through the divine mercy, the men who composed our national Formularies being in leading situations in the church, and the nation, from the manifested abominations and cruelties of popery, being in a prepared state to receive such Formularies, they became part of the authorized and acknowledged national religion of our country. Similar occurrences prepared the way for the reception of the like doctrines through the Reformed Churches.

At no subsequent period should we in all probability in

* For a list of charities established by the Reformers, see the end of Willett's Synopsis Papismi.

our own country have had Articles so purely scriptural. At a later period we should have had the straiter refinements of the Lambeth Articles ; at a still later we should have had an extreme on the very opposite side. The wisdom given to our Reformers, even beyond that of those of other countries, calls for our warmest gratitude to God, the fountain of all wisdom. The caution with which they proceeded in every alteration was truly admirable. They had a jealous fear of introducing needless and rash innovations. Perhaps if in any thing they erred, it was in leaning too much on the early Fathers as a needful testimony to the doctrines of the gospel, and the discipline of the church ; and yet this was safer than a total and rash neglect of them : and they often speak with much Christian wisdom on the subject. (See Jewell's Defence, p. 59.) Many of them, as Jewell, Ridley, and Cranmer, were unquestionably men of considerable learning in the works of the Fathers and school Divines, and were thus able to meet the papists on their own ground, while they ever manifested great charity towards them, and gave them no needless offence.

The love of God, as a reconciled and tender Father, displayed to us through Immanuel, the only and complete Saviour, was their leading topic : Christ crucified, not beheld on a visible crucifix, but received in the heart by a lively faith. Hence the grand features of their statements were salvation by grace through faith unto holiness—*we love him because he first loved us*—in short, Jesus Christ, our entire Saviour. We have a beautiful specimen of their doctrines in the Homilies on Faith, Good Works, and Salvation. A sweet spirit of adoption, a feeling of the love of God as a Father, pervades and enlivens their writings. Doctrines are not brought forward, (except as they were compelled to it,) controversially, but practically and devotionally. They distinctly held man's total moral inability, depravity, and corruption, God's free and sovereign mercy in our salvation, and our election in Christ Jesus unto all holy obedience.*

* Without commending the spirit of such men as Prynne, Edwards, Bow-

In our own church there was a most happy agreement with the foreign churches. Martyr and Bucer came over and assisted in the first establishment of our church, and the disputes were not then, as Bishop Carleton shows, about doctrine, in which there was a general agreement, but about ceremonies and discipline, to which the puritans objected. Bishop Carleton states, that in the Articles and Homilies they had special respect unto Augustine. On justification however, they were much more clear and scriptural than that Father.

Most carefully did the Reformers guard against the fearful error of charging God in any degree with man's sin. On this, Melancthon, speaking of the cause of sin and contingency, says, 'Young students are to be admonished to seek simple conclusions, conducive to piety and holiness of life, and to rest in them, rather than to suffer themselves to be led away by captious and delusive disputations. Among such conclusions is the principle ever to be held fast and embraced with the whole heart, that God is not the cause of sin, nor does He will its existence, but its true causes are the will of Satan and that of man.' * On James i. 17. Queen Elizabeth's Bishop says, 'Seeing all good things come of God, we ought not to make Him the author of evil.'

But the doctrine, the revival of which chiefly characterized the Reformation, was that of JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH. This runs through all the writings of the Reformers, like a rich vein of gold, and their works are, in this doctrine particularly, a mine of

man, and Toplady, or their mode of defending the doctrines of grace, it appears to the Author that they have successfully established the main position that the Reformers did hold the views above mentioned.

* His words in the last Edition of his common Places (See Opera Tom. I. p. 162) are so forcible and sententious, that I quote them. 'Estque hæc vera et pia sententia, utraque manû, et verius toto pectore tenenda, Deum non esse causam peccati, nec velle peccatum, nec impellere voluntates ad peccandum, nec approbare peccatum; sed vere et horribiliter irasci peccato, ut toties suo verbo assiduis pœnis et calamitatibus mundi comminatione æternæ viæ declarat: Imo iram adversus peccatum maxime ostendit filius Dei, qui apparuit, ut victima fieret pro peccato et ostenderet Diabolum esse autorem peccati, et sua morte iram ingentem Patris placaret.'

invaluable wealth to the church. 'A Christian may glory,' says Luther, 'that in Christ he has all things : that all the righteousness and merits of Christ are his own by virtue of that spiritual union which he has with him by faith. On the other hand, that all his sins are no longer his, but that Christ through the same union, bears the burden of them. And this is the confidence of Christians, this is the refreshment of their consciences, that by faith our sins cease to be ours judicially, because they are laid on Him, "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."'

Luther considered this the great doctrine of Christianity, and the test of orthodoxy or heresy, as it was held soundly or corruptly ; that all other points were subordinate to or centred in this ; and that every objection to it which could possibly be devised, was done away by this single consideration, namely, that a right faith was necessarily productive of good works.*

The English Reformation was happily conducted under the authority of government, and with a constant reference to antiquity. The Reformation in some other countries had to contend with both temporal and spiritual authorities, and in some places a beginning was made, but the effort failed. Though Calvin's memory has been amply redeemed from the charge of opposition and insubordination to constituted authorities,† yet he was in principle a Republican. Knox and others imbibed Calvin's views of religion, which were extensively received on the Continent and in Scotland.

Our own Reformers, like the Primitive Christians, were rather called to believe and suffer than to write ; yet they have left a mantle behind which succeeding teachers will find of inestimable value.

Tindal was one of the earliest, and has been called the Apostle of England. He will amply repay perusal. He is clear in his doctrinal statements, taking the same views

* See Milner, Vol. iv. p. 421.

† See Horsl y's Sermon on Rom. xiii. 1., and Appendix.

as Calvin, though he wrote before him : he is comforting, practical, and devotional.

Latimer, by his naiveté and simplicity, his wit, honesty, and piety, has, more than the other Reformers, retained his popularity. He will furnish many hints for useful addresses to the people.

Cranmer's writings manifest sound learning, deep piety, and holy wisdom. His Catechism and his Book on the Sacrament, and the Homilies prepared by him, are full of the very spirit of the Reformation.

Bishop Ridley and Philpot were esteemed among the most learned of our Reformers. They had sound and clear views of that Gospel which they sealed with their blood.

Bradford's Letters are among the most edifying and instructive remains of this period ; the sweet spirit of adoption breathes throughout.

Jewell is eminent for his extensive learning, his sound views, and his Christian eloquence. All his works are valuable.

Foxe is a voluminous writer, having written several works besides his Acts and Monuments ; he is serious, honest, and open in his avowal of the doctrine of Christ.

Knox was more especially called to action than to writing, and his life is a vivid book, illustrating by its own brightness the energy of divine grace ; his History of the Reformation, which is his principal work, was not finished by himself.

We need not speak farther of Barnes, Becon, Frith, Gilby, Hamilton, Hooper, Lever, L. Ridley, and other noble confessors of the faith in this age.

The English Reformers are now becoming more accessible. Mr. Richmond and the Religious Tract Society rendered an invaluable service by their selections. The reprint of Jewell at the Clarendon Press, and of Foxe by Seeleys, and of their works in general through the Parker Society, greatly facilitate the reading of these authors. Jewell's Apology and the Defence of it, Bradford's Letters, Philpot's Examinations, Cranmer's Notes on the King's

Book, Foxe's Martyrs, will especially reward the labour of study.

Through eternity a countless number of British Christians will have to bless God for raising up our Reformers. They erected here a standard of truth which has since been carried to remote regions, and is now planted in almost every corner of the earth. All glory to God our Saviour !

The character of the writings of FOREIGN DIVINES was diversified.

Luther is powerful, lively, and decisive ; a keen, distinct, and strong evangelical statement distinguishes his writings. He is ever insisting on the main doctrine of justification by faith, and boldly maintaining the whole range of truth.

Melancthon is polished and cautious, decisive in the same main doctrine, but hesitating on many points, and backward to state his views on Calvinistic topics, having much natural aversion to controversy.

Calvin has an uncommonly fine genius, and is full of beautiful and original illustrations of God's word ; he is more consistent, and accurate, and systematic than the other Reformers. His danger is pushing his statements beyond the Scriptures.

Zwinglius is acute, penetrating, and adventurous ; he holds justification by faith, but has some peculiar opinions.

We need not proceed farther. The writings of Brentius, Œcolampadius, Martyr, Bucer, Bullinger, Beza, and a vast number of others, with their Commentaries on the Scriptures, occupy many large folio volumes.

Those who can read Latin, will find their works, and those of Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Chemnicus, &c., full of sound and invaluable divinity : at least this is the Author's conviction, as far as he has had opportunity to look into them.

The respective characters of the principal Reformers admirably qualified them for their work ; the honest courage of Luther, the mild and holy spirit of Melancthon, the

acuteness of Zuinglius, the clear mind and fine genius of Calvin, the holy wisdom of Cranmer, the determined boldness of Knox, all under the influence of divine grace, made them the worthy and suitable champions of the Reformation ; and, with all their faults, to this day their writings remain invaluable documents of sound theology.

It is delightful in Calvin's last will, made only a month before his death, to see him (while expressing his continuance in the same faith which he preached, but without introducing any of those views which distinguished his system) offering up his desire to God, in terms that every Christian would concur in, ' beseeching him so to wash and cleanse me in the blood of the great Redeemer, which was shed for all poor sinners, that in his image I may appear before his face.'

The writings of the foreign divines were extensively translated about the time of our own Reformation ; but being printed in black letter, and now scarcely procurable—the English reader can derive but little advantage from these translations. A society like the Parker Society, might be usefully formed, to re-produce them, as one has been for those of Calvin.

Of *Erasmus* it may be well to speak more particularly. Many of his devotional Treatises are valuable, and have been reprinted in this country. It has been supposed, that the use made of his Testament (which the clergy were directed to possess, and which was to be fixed in the churches,) is an evidence that our Reformers held the doctrines which Erasmus maintained against Luther. This by no means follows. In the prefatory Address of John Old it is asserted, that Erasmus, like Jerome, might both be deceived and deceive. It must be remembered, that at the time that the book was published (in 1548), few works of the foreign Reformers had been translated into English, and few of our own Reformers had written much. Erasmus's work on the New Testament, taking into consideration his learning and reputation, was a valuable pre-

paratory work, and was followed by others of a higher standard.*

Erasmus improved the plan of interpretation of Scripture, by condemning the fondness of the Fathers for allegorising; and in his own Paraphrase on the New Testament he very much abstains from allegorical interpretation. Mr. Conybeare, after showing that he contended for its limited and prudent use, remarks, 'The use and value of such a spiritual understanding of the scriptures, beyond that which is to be derived from a mere acquiescence in the outward letter, he affirms to be, that wheresoever it arises out of fair and reasonable grounds of analogy, it contributes to strengthen the impressions made by religious truth, to interest the affections more deeply and constantly in its behalf, to stimulate us to higher exertions, and to console us under the doubts and difficulties of the Christian warfare. That these are the results and privileges of a spiritual view of the Christian scheme, and of the frame of mind which such a view, accepted and entertained in singleness and sincerity of heart, must produce, it cannot be questioned; that such benefits, however, are to be secured or enhanced by anything approaching to the misinterpretation or misapplication of the sacred text, is a position both untrue in itself, and on many accounts highly unsafe.' †

Erasmus himself, however, was far from rising to the

* In this very work he clearly states the doctrine of salvation by grace. On Ephes. ii. 8, 9, he observes, 'The thing is often to be rehearsed, and ought to be fixed deeply in your heart, it cometh of free grace. I say that you have obtained salvation from the destruction wherein ye were entangled: lest ye should follow the error of some of the Jews, which think to be saved for observing the precepts of Moses's Law. You are indebted for your salvation to the faith whereby ye believe the gospel, and yet you may not brag of faith as though it come of yourself. Christ loved you first, and having drawn you to himself, he has given you power that you should love him again. And he it is that has freely poured into you the gift of faith, by which you should set darkness apart, and see the light of God's verity. It is wholly, therefore, to be ascribed unto God's free gift, so that no man has thereof to boast, as though it were of his own.'

In the prologue to the Romans it is said, 'Moses's sophisters are but deceivers, which teach that a man may and must prepare himself to grace and to the favour of God, with good works, before he have the spirit and true faith of Christ.' Nothing can be more evangelical and spiritual than the whole Prologue.

† Conybeare's Lectures, p. 225.

evangelical spirit of the Reformers ; and his course furnishes a most instructive lesson of the evil and danger of wanting a simple and upright, a decided and devoted confession of Christ, and a readiness to suffer for his sake. The highest wisdom is to be simple, open and bold in our confession of Christ. Christian Reader ! may this grace ever be given to us from above !

The Reformers urged strongly the importance of the literal interpretation of scripture. Luther says, 'The literal sense of scripture alone is the whole foundation of faith and Christian theology.—'Allegories prove nothing, and are empty speculations ;' in this, Melancthon, Calvin, Peter Martyr, and the great body of the Reformers concurred ; Calvin, indeed, more entirely pressed the literal interpretation ; and his whole Commentary is on this plan.

We need not here attempt to draw the line farther as to the theological sentiments of the foreign divines. As Melancthon grew in experience, he became more cautious in his sentiments, as the different editions of his commonplace book prove. Yet his correspondence with Calvin shows that he by no means held Calvin's view in that obnoxious light which many do.*

Nor can we, in this rapid sketch, enter with minuteness into the views of distinct churches. Authors in the Lutheran churches generally followed Melancthon ; and in the Reformed, Calvin ; and in the Belgic churches before Arminius, an ultra-Calvinism prevailed among many.†

* As to Melancthon's sentiments on these views, see his Works, Vol. iv. p. 23., and Calvin's Epistles, pp. 82, 175., and Davenant against Hoard, p. 72.

† The sources of information respecting the Reformers are (1) Their publicly acknowledged catechisms, confessions, creeds, defences, and replies. (2) Their more private writings. (3) Original Historians, such as Seckendorff, Scultetus, Sleidan, and Thuanus, for the continent ; and Foxe, Fuller, Burnet, and Strype, for our own country. Modern Historians, as Hume, Robertson, and many others, can by no means be relied on for a just view of the principles of the Reformers. Of more ancient historians also it may be observed, that some, like Foxe, write in the same spirit of the Reformation. Take, for instance, his account of the origin of printing ; he attributes it to the ordination of God, and enters into a religious view of its value. Robertson, (a Christian divine), giving an account of the same thing, calls it, in a serious historical work, 'a fortunate discovery.' Fuller is pious, quaint, and witty. Others, like Strype, Burnet, and Brandt, attain not in their own views the Spirit of the Reformers, but are very valuable in their collections of original

SECTION IV.

SUCCESSORS OF THE REFORMERS.

The Reformation was maintained by successors of a similar spirit. The chief writers for a great part of a century after that blessed event preserve a uniformity of doctrinal statement which we do not subsequently find. Bishop Carleton says : 'The uniformity of doctrine was held in our church without disturbance, as long as those worthy Bishops lived who were employed in the Reformation.'—See his Examination of Montague's Appeal, p. 7. The Holy Scriptures reigned with just and beneficent sway over human authors, and were the ultimate referees on all questionable topics. Many able and pious men succeeded the Reformers, and that in places of authority and influence, and thus carried on and maintained the work which had been so happily commenced.

Confining now our views to our own country, and to the Church of England, the men of whom we speak were attached to its doctrines and discipline ; many of them were in the highest situations ; all ministered in her sanctuary, and they were very nearly united in their views of the doctrines of the gospel. This class includes Archbishops Grindal, Whitgift, and Sandys, Fulke, Willett, Bilson, Whitaker, Perkins, Bishop Babington, Preston, Rainolds, Sibbes, Hildersham, Ward of Ipswich, Archbishop Usher, Bolton, Ward of Cambridge, and coming still lower, will include Bishops Bedell, Carleton, Davenant, Hall, Morton, with many others of similar character who agreed with them.

information, and authentic documents. It is gratifying to see that the works of the Reformers are much more in demand than they were, and that they are now, both on the continent and in our own country, reprinting on a fuller scale than hitherto. May God grant, that their writings may thus accomplish a second revival of religion, similar in its effects, and more extended in its operation, and with all the advantage of the experience which we have since had of the danger of departing from their scriptural principles !

The moderation of the times allowed Hildersham, and men of his views, attached to the doctrines, but averse to the rites and ceremonies of the church, to retain livings and minister in them.

The writings of this age are full of gospel truths, clearly displayed and applied. They are very instructive and edifying; and, with few exceptions, a remarkable uniformity of doctrine prevailed.* With great powers of mind and extensive learning, they enforced the peculiarities of the Christian faith.

Yet the character of some of these writings is marked by a refinement of statement, and a multiplication of distinctions and divisions, and a subtlety of argument, instead of the more simple, experimental, and practical character of their predecessors. They seem to have been driven to this by the subtleties of papists and others who opposed them. This, however, led on to a more artificial and scholastic statement of divine truth than we find in the scriptures; and divines seemed disposed, if not to go farther than divine revelation opened the way, yet led by the departure of some from the doctrines of the Reformation, to state doctrines more guardedly, or more distinctly and explicitly, than the Sacred Volume does. Hence some began to maintain doctrines theoretically, rather than in the sweetness of holy love, and in the simplicity of faith. The doctrine of righteousness also, was less dwelt on than the doctrine of grace; we need to have respect to the recompense of reward as well as to the freedom of salvation.

Controversies sprung up in the Roman church between the Molinists and the Dominicans, similar to those which afterwards arose in the Protestant church between the Arminians and the Calvinists. Molina, in 1588, published a book on principles not dissimilar to those which Arminius or his followers afterwards maintained. The Dominicans maintained strenuously the doctrine of Augustine. Similar contests in the following century arose in the

* Till Arminius arose, there were no contests of any moment but with the Papists, or those who disliked the church ceremonies.

Romish church between the Jansenists and the Jesuits, and immense learning and acuteness were manifested on both sides. There have ever been discussions on these abstruse points : nor is human ingenuity likely to solve difficulties which the scriptures have not removed, and the unhappy result has too often been, that what is truly evangelical, as well as what is holy, useful, and practical, is lost amid contentions on things beyond our reach.

The leading divines in Queen Elizabeth's reign must be considered as making rather a more distinct and explicit statement of Calvinistic doctrine than their predecessors. Calvin's Institutes were read in the schools by order of convocation. Indeed, an ultra-Calvinism, which appears to have been maintained by some, rather than the scriptural divinity of our first Reformers, led, as might be expected, to opposing statements in doctrine. With this a pertinacity on one side of adherence to, and on the other of rejection of, non-essential ceremonies grew and extended. Thus the attention of Christ's church was turned from vital truths ; and a disputatious and unchristian spirit was excited. Yet to the contentions respecting ceremonies we are indebted for two of the ablest and most scriptural defences of our ecclesiastical establishment ;—Whitgift's Replies to Cartwright, and Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity. But Bishop Carleton observes, that at this time there was no difference between the Bishops and the Puritans on doctrine (there was a mutual consent on that subject) but only on discipline. He adds, 'The first disturbers of this uniformity of doctrine were Barret and Baro, in Cambridge, and after them Thomson.' This was in 1595. The University called Barret's sentiments, which were Arminian, 'divers Popish errors ;' and the Lambeth Articles were framed to counteract them, and were approved by Archbishops Whitgift and Hutton. Queen Elizabeth and Cecil, with that foresight and wisdom for which they were distinguished, justly objected to these becoming part of the authorized documents of our national religion, on account of their being less moderate, and too precise and exclusive.

Fuller observes, respecting the Lambeth Articles, that their testimony is an infallible evidence what was the general and received doctrine of England in that age, about the forenamed controversies.'

There was, however, in the Author's view, a serious evil in thus attempting to fathom the unfathomable mind of Jehovah. Where angels probably adore in silent submission, men, with too little humility, and with presumptuous curiosity, have either opposed or evaded His plain declaration, or not limiting themselves to the words of scripture, have scrutinized the mind and character of the only wise God. How just was Carleton's view of this. 'In the matter of predestination I have ever been fearful to meddle; it is one of the greatest and deepest of God's mysteries. We are with reverence to wonder, and with faith and humility to follow, that which God has revealed in this point, and there to stay.' This evil is traced to its source, Job xi. 7—12. Col. ii. 18. Dr. Owen excellently remarks on the purpose of God, 'We know it not, we cannot know it. It is not our duty to know it. The knowledge of it is not proposed as of any use to us. Yet, it is our sin to inquire any thing into it. It may indeed seem to some like the tree of knowledge of good and evil, to be pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise (as all secret forbidden things seem to carnal minds), but men can gather no fruit from it but death.'*

The Irish Articles agreed upon in 1615, comprehend the Lambeth Articles, but contain a much fuller view of doctrine. They were never expressly revoked, though the Irish clergy now have only to testify their approval of the thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church.† For the Author's part, he confesses that he is afraid lest those clear statements, which, in order to make things distinct, and meet the sophistries of learned objectors, express doctrines more perspicuously than the Holy Scriptures do, should

* Owen on the Spirit, folio, p. 523.

† The Irish Articles may be found in Neal's History of the Puritans. They were drawn up by Usher.

fall under that censure, *the Lord knoweth the thoughts* (or reasonings) *of the wise, that they are vain.*

On the Continent, similar discussions arose. They originated mainly from Arminius, who was a pupil of Beza's, and at one time approved of his and Calvin's views. About the year 1600, he was requested to write a confutation of some ministers at Delft who opposed Calvinistic views, and undertaking to do it, he embraced the opinions which he intended to confute.*

The leading position of Arminius is, that God elects to salvation from foreseen faith and holiness ; but it is with many modifications, and conceding, at least in words, that man could not by his natural ability believe. The leading position of Calvinists is, that men are elect, nor for, but *unto* faith and holiness.† Innumerable modifications and ramifications of these positions were made in the controversy which has arisen on this subject. It will be obvious that the excess of one system is Antinomianism, and of the other, Pelagianism ; but it would not be difficult to show that either position might be so guarded and qualified in itself or by other parallel doctrines, as on the one hand fully to provide for salvation by grace, and on the other to secure man's responsibility, the obligations of the moral law, and every interest of holiness ; the points on which the true believer on either side will cordially meet. In the course of the discussions on both sides (if Dr. Owen's Display of Arminianism on the one side, or Womock's Calvinist's Cabinet Unlocked on the other, are to be depended on) most unscriptural statements were made. It is however, very easy to take a passage from the context of any controversial writing so as to give it a most objectionable character, when in its connection it was perhaps greatly modified.

The most serious evil of Arminius's views is their tendency to deface and injure the freeness, and fulness, and

* There are some curious particulars respecting Arminius in the Christian Review for September, 1828, pp. 493—510.

† The Author's sentiments on this subject may be seen more at large in chapter vii.

riches of divine grace, and to exalt the powers of man ; a tendency which was seen in the retrograde course of many who had adopted his sentiments. The conceding that man could not by his natural ability believe, a concession which the Scriptures manifestly require, where made without equivocation, appears to me to be in fact giving up the point in dispute.

There are serious evils also in pushing Calvinistic views to an extreme. Speaking favourably of Dr. Ames' work against Grevinchovius, Usher still observes, ' If in seeking to make that straight which was crooked in the Arminian's opinion he hath bended it too far the contrary way, and inclined too much upon the other extremity, it is a thing which in the heat of disputation hath befallen many worthy men before him.'—Usher's Letters, p. 50.

An adequate sense of our fallen, and ruined, guilty, and depraved state, lies at the very root of all this controversy. Let this be deeply felt, let the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and our just desert of everlasting punishment through sin, be adequately perceived, and there will be little difficulty in other things. The only wonder will be, that condemnation is not final and universal ; and that for any human being, there should be riches of grace to pardon, save, and for ever bless. The ruin of any will be easily resolvable into an equity, infinitely wise and holy in the Sovereign Ruler of all worlds ; and the salvation of any into the unsearchable riches of divine grace.

In the Author's own view, as the reader will have seen, the position that we are elect unto holiness, is more scriptural (Eph. i. 4 ; 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14 ; 1 Peter i. 1, 2.) and more agreeable to the views of the Reformers and of the Church of England, and less liable to abuse, and more accordant with those dispositions which it is the great design of the gospel to produce ; but he is satisfied that the difference may be made merely verbal, and, if salvation by grace be held, should never separate Christians.

Arminius maintained, at least at one time, the all-essential Christian doctrine, justification by faith ; and, in some

other respects, held the doctrines of grace so clearly, that he would, by some modern writers, have been charged with Calvinism. The study of his works might be very useful to those who have, under that name, opposed evangelical religion.*

His subtle, and in the author's view, in some points unscriptural sentiments, led to great discussions. Men too readily thought the whole essentials of religion were at issue, and earnestly contended for their own particular views, as Bishop Hall observes : ' Men esteem opinions, because their own—What they have undertaken must be true ; victory is sought for, not satisfaction ; victory of the author, not of the cause. He is a rare man that knows to yield, as well as to argue.'

The dispute on this subject is not, as far as it affects pious people, like that between Augustine and the Pelagians, on Sanctification ; and Luther and the Romanists, on Justification ; the differences in these cases were much more manifestly between the servants of Christ and the enemies of Christ. We cannot reasonably doubt the real religion of very many on both sides in this dispute. The points of controversy are far more subtle, and often removed above the field of scripture, and, therefore, not only much more difficult of a right decision, but often beyond the possibility of our knowledge ; and still, and probably ever will, leave the Church of God, while on earth, divided

* Arminius says, ' I believe that sinners are accounted righteous solely by the obedience of Christ, and that the righteousness of Christ is the only meritorious cause on account of which God pardons the sins of believers, and reckons them as righteous as if they had perfectly fulfilled the law. But since God imputes the righteousness of Christ to none except believers, I conclude that in this sense it may be well and properly said, To a man who believes, faith is from grace imputed for righteousness, since God hath set forth Jesus Christ his Son to be a judgment-seat of grace, or a propitiation through faith in his blood.' He goes on to state, that he should not hesitate to sign Calvin's statements on this subject.¹ In his Theses, on Faith, he states that the Holy Spirit is the Author of Faith ; and, on justification he says, '*Justificatio est actio Dei iudicis justa et gratiosa, quâ de throno gratiæ et misericordiæ hominem peccatorum sed fidelem propter Christum, Christique obedientiam et justitiam a peccatis absolvit, et justum censit, ad justificati salutem et justitiæ gratiæque divinæ gloriam.*'

¹ See Opera, Frankfort, 1635, p. 102 and 316.

in sentiment. Generally speaking, the Christian must heartily have joined Augustine and Luther : but real Christians are more divided in this case ; and probably many of these points will not be settled, till the light of glory burst upon us. May we not entertain the hope that to their mutual surprise, Arminius and Gomarus, and Laud and Prynne, seeing their own infirmities, will rejoice together in magnifying one Saviour through eternity. Sure we are, however, that then the burden of the song will not be any expression leading to the thought of man's having saved himself ; but *salvation* will be wholly ascribed to *God and the Lamb for ever*.

The great turning-point of the Arminian controversy, among the pious, is not so revealed in the scriptures, as to be resolvable by human intellect ; nor is it, where it refers to the Divine Being and His proceedings, of the practical moment some think. This mystery and depth of the divine judgments is not pleasing to the carnal mind, but it is profitable to a humble spirit. The extreme views of each side are pleasing enough to the natural man : whether it be of resolving all into an absolute necessity, with the Stoics and Mahomedans ; or into faith and good works, wrought by man as the cause of our election. There are no mysteries here, but neither are scriptural.

Disputes increased till it was thought desirable by the authorities in Belgium, to convene a synod at Dort. This was held in 1618 and 1619 ; and the decrees of the Synod contain a very able, clear, and distinct statement of Calvinistic views. They are well worth attentive study. Nothing can be more unfair than Tilenus' abridgment of them, adopted by Heylin, Womock, and Tomline.* The

* Womock's *Arcana*, in which he quotes expressions from the private writings of Calvinists, to support Tilenus' unfair Abridgment, is a most unjustifiable mode of defence. Because private writers have said rash things, are the publicly recognized sentiments to have attached to them every thing that those rash expressions might justify? What Church could stand this? Bishop Hall justly says, ' It will be requisite to a peaceable moderation that we should give to every opinion its own due extent ; not casting private men's conceits upon public churches, nor fathering single fancies upon a community.' See Works, Vol. vii. p. 457.

acts at large, with the sentiments of the divines from different places appended to them, will amply repay the perusal. Mr. Scott translated but a small part of the whole volume, and has too much considered the history of the preceding events, given by him, as impartial.

It is now generally agreed that such statements of doctrine are far too minute and particular and detailed, to be wisely adopted as the general standard of any Church of Christ.* A book was published also by the opposing party, entitled ‘*Acta Synodalia Dordracena Ministrorum Remonstrantium*,’ containing first their account of the proceedings, and then their sentiments on the doctrines. Mr. Hales and Dr. Balcanqual give various interesting particulars respecting the Synod. See their Letters, at the end of Hale’s *Golden Remains*. Bishop Hall decidedly approved of the canons, and says, ‘I shall live and die in the suffrage of that reverend Synod : and do confidently avow that those other opinions cannot stand with the doctrines of the Church of England.’

But the course of treatment adopted against the Remonstrants, with the great talents and abilities of some of them, such as Grotius, Episcopius, Curcellæus, and Limborch ; and, must we not add, the agreeableness of their doctrines to the natural intellect, if not to the unconverted heart, all tended to spread their views very widely, and

* The Synod of Dort cannot be considered as an assembly for the free discussion of the controversy. The general sentiments of the Reformed Churches (not including the Lutheran, were all on one side ; the Remonstrants were rather judged, than judges ; and the minds of the divines assembled, even those of the foreign churches, were too much made up, to yield to opposing views any thing that was essential in their own sentiments. But it was not therefore an unprofitable assembly. It had the good effect of stating, in the way that holy men thought the most unexceptionable, that view of doctrine which Calvinists in general adopt, and of clearing them from many justly exceptionable opinions, which some persons entertained. Allowing that some of the proceedings towards the contra-remonstrants were harsh, their ejection from the Synod in a passion by the President unjustifiable, and that there was a wholly unscriptural severity in the way the decrees were executed, we do not therefore concede that the canons of the Synod were in the main unscriptural and untenable. There is scriptural truth in them ; and the error, if error there be, seems to consist in defining beyond the scriptures, rather than any anti-scriptural statement.

The evil to be feared, in all conclusions by human councils, is lest we repose in human decrees, and make man’s word the ground of faith, rather than God’s word, and so only attain a human instead of a divine faith.

prepared for that falling away from the doctrines of the Reformation, which was more distinctly exhibited in the following age.

If we may judge from the accounts before us, the learned GROTIUS, and those who acted with him, were severely treated. Severity as usual failed of its end. But we cannot here enter into the history of the times, or consider whether provocations on one side, may not have occasioned severities on the other. The death-bed of Grotius was Christian. His defence of the truth of the Christian religion, and of the atonement, are still valuable works. But his expositions explain away the doctrines and the prophecies of the Bible, and he made sacrifices and admissions to opposite parties, Papists and Socinians, which truth does not justify, and which, under the sanction of his name, gained access, and helped to bring on a lamentable and an extensive departure from the truth.*

Mr. Conybeare points out that Grotius far too exclusively confined his interpretation to the immediate History of the Jews. Cocceius, on the other hand, went to the opposite extreme of attaching a spiritual sense to every part of scripture. Vitranga, and Venema, dwell on the spiritual interpretation to the neglect of the literal prophetic application; they have been considered as too much attached to the system of Cocceius. Lampe is a valuable Commentator.

Some of the successors of the Remonstrants gradually verged to the Socinian scheme, and found a champion in

* The character of Grotius, involved as it was in the controversies of the day, has been variously represented, by different sides. Baxter's Grotian Religion discovered, was replied to by Bramhall and Womock. Dr. Owen has some remarks on his Annotations. See his Works, Vol. ix. p. 291. Brandt's History of the Reformation, and his Life by Burigny should also be consulted. Leydecker's Work is in Dutch. Dr. Owen says, that his Annotations on the whole Bible throughout, wherein his expositions are given, do for the most part fall in with those of the Socinians, and oftentimes consist in the very words of Socinus and Smalcus. Vol. viii. p. 10. Grotius led the way to that pernicious perversion of Scripture which has come to infidel maturity in modern Neologianism. Mr. Hallam also shews at length his growing tendency to Romanism, and that he and Casaubon were misled by the love of antiquity and the study of the Fathers; a danger to which many are now exposed. See Hallam iii. 54—67.

the well-known Le Clerc.* ‘The younger Turretin, Wytttenbach, Zimmerman, and Werenfels all afford examples of the more restricted and cautious (perhaps occasionally too cautious) admission of the secondary and spiritual sense.’

In our own country, while Archbishop Abbot (whose character we cannot but think has been misrepresented by Clarendon,)[†] lived, peace was preserved in our own church. Mr. Onslow says, ‘He used a moderation in ecclesiastical discipline, which if it had been followed by his successor, the ruin that soon after fell upon the church might very likely have been prevented.’

He was succeeded by the unhappy LAUD. It is difficult even at this day to speak of this prelate without prejudice. To read one side, we might think he was not inferior to Cyprian, a venerable father and martyr ; to read another, that he was a Papist and a tyrant. Probably neither Prynne’s *Breviat* and Canterbury’s *Doom* on one side ; nor Heylin’s nor Wharton’s account of his *Life and Troubles*, nor the more recent work of Lawson, on the other, separately give a correct view. The following remarks of Gilpin, contrasting his proceedings with those of Cranmer, suggest some important considerations as to his conduct.

‘Both were good men, both were equally zealous for religion, and both were engaged in the work of the Reformation.—While Cranmer pursued his with caution and temper, Laud, in the violence of his integrity, (for he was certainly a well-meaning man) making allowances neither for men nor opinions, was determined to carry all before him. The consequence was, that he did nothing which he attempted, while Cranmer did every thing. And it is probable, that if Henry had chosen such an instrument as Laud, he would have miscarried in his point : while Charles, with such a primate as Cranmer, would

* See Conybeare, pp. 273, 274.

† See Vol. i. p. 81, and compare it with Speaker Onslow’s account in Russel’s *Life of Abbot*, as quoted by Chalmers. Clarendon ought to be compared with Whitelocke and Baxter.

either have been successful in his schemes, or at least have avoided the fatal consequences that ensued.'

Happily, man is not the final judge of any of his fellow-creatures. Indeed, our subject does not oblige us to enter at large into the personal character of the Archbishop. Both to him and the King, Charles the First, afflictions were much blessed, and their last days were full of noble sentiments and real piety. His Diary, published at length by Wharton, and his Devotions, show his conscientiousness and sincerity, though with considerable tincture of superstition ; and his conference with Fisher manifested both his disposition and his ability against the Romanists ; but we find not the clear statements of evangelical truth, which abound in the writings of the Reformers. His measures were harsh, and helped to excite the unhappy spirit of the times, and to aggravate rather than to alleviate the evil ; but it must also be added, that the proceedings against him, by which he lost his life, were severe and oppressive, and like the other harsh and retaliatory measures on the opposite side, only strengthened the cause which they designed to overthrow. May Christians learn not to fight with carnal weapons ; and that the Church triumphs by suffering for the truth, by the gospel of love, and not by the law of severity ! Have we not, however, cause to be thankful to God, that Laud, as he had not Cranmer's distinct evangelical views, had not also his political wisdom ? There seems at least some reason for the fear that we might in that case have lost some of the all-important principles of the Reformation.

The Deputation to the Synod of Dort, and the conduct of the English Divines there, show that the doctrines of Arminius were then considered as novelties. The publications of the Foreign Divines, Arminius and Episcopius, Grotius and Limborch, soon seem to have produced a great change, not only in their own but also in other countries, and a change truly injurious, as far as it tended to weaken scriptural statements of the doctrines of grace.

Observations will now be added on individual writers.

The invaluable HOOKER died in 1600 ; his life by Walton, written with that simplicity which marks Walton's biographical pieces, gives us an interesting view of his meek and humble, meditating and retired character ; while his works manifest great vigour of thought, eloquence of expression, soundness of judgment, and decidedly evangelical sentiment : his Ecclesiastical Polity is one of the bulwarks of the Established Church of England.

Richard SIBBES is an excellent author of these days. His 'Bruised Reed' and 'Soul's Conflict' were published by himself ; but many of his works were published from notes taken while he was preaching. He died about 1635. It is to be regretted that his works have never been wholly collected and published, with such corrections or notes as might be requisite. They are full of evangelical and consolatory statements, and yet very holy and practical ; and are deservedly favourite works with pious and devout minds.

There is another character that is specially worthy of our attention, both for the value of his writings, and the wise and holy part which he took ; we mean Archbishop USHER, who died in 1656. He was one of the most wonderful men of that wonderful age, and is not unjustly styled by Dr. Johnson, 'the great luminary of the Irish church.' The praise which he received from the most learned men of the age was of the highest character, and the University of Oxford in 1644, styled him 'the most skilful of primitive antiquity, the unanswerable defender of the orthodox religion. He had read ALL the Fathers. His loyalty in the most trying scenes was proved to the uttermost : while he freely discharged his conscience in reproving the sins of the royal party, and testifying against injurious measures pursued ; yet he adhered to the king amid all his trials.

His writings have not yet been collected together.* They contain an invaluable mass of historical and ecclesiastical

* A complete edition of all Archbishop Usher's Works is publishing at the expence of the University of Dublin. The original MS. of Usher's *Bibliotheca Theologica* is in the British Museum. It is supposed that the works will fill twenty-three large 8vo. volumes.

information, and of controversial and practical divinity. Many remain only in manuscript. His answer to the Jesuit is still one of the best pieces against Romanism : his Body of Divinity, though never revised by him, is full of valuable theology ; his sermons are plain, evangelical, and spiritual. The doctrinal views of Usher may be seen in the Irish Articles, which were prepared by him. Yet he distinctly held general redemption, and his observations on that point are very judicious.*

All sides were anxious to claim the Archbishop as being on their part, and after his death Dr. Bernard had to defend him from those who wished to prove a change of sentiment previous to his death.† It seems from some of his expressions with regard to the Romanists, that he had not those enlarged views of toleration which now prevail. By toleration of Romanism, I do not however mean the pecuniary support and maintenance of that anti-christian religion by a Protestant state. The learning and situation of Usher brought him into contact and correspondence with many with whom his views did not concur ; such as Laud and Hammond on one side, and some of the Puritans on the other.

Dr. HAMMOND had extended learning and real piety, and

* There are two letters on this subject in his life by Dr. Parr. The Archbishop, after speaking of the all-sufficient satisfaction of Christ made for the sins of the whole world, goes on—'We must in the matter of our redemption, carefully put a distinction between the satisfaction of Christ absolutely considered, and the application thereof to every one in particular. The universality of the satisfaction derogates nothing from the necessity of special grace in the application ; neither does the speciality of the one any ways abridge the generality of the other.—As in one respect Christ might have been said to die for all, so in another respect truly said not to have died for all ; and my belief is, that the principal end of the Lord's death was, that *he might gather together in one the children of God scattered abroad* ; [John xi. 52.] and that for their sakes he did especially sanctify himself, that *they also might be sanctified through the truth* ; [John xvii. 19.] and therefore it may be well concluded that Christ in a special manner died for these ; but to infer from hence that in no manner of respect he died for others, is but a very weak collection.' He then shows this to be 'not only a sufficient cure for the sins of the whole world,' but that it 'should be laid open to all and denied to none that indeed do take the benefit thereof. For he is much deceived that thinks a preaching of a bare sufficiency is able to yield sufficient ground of comfort to a distressed soul, without giving a farther way to it ;'—and adds, 'it is the word of promise that gives comfort ;—See Letters, pp. 46—53 Both letters deserve a careful perusal.

† See Bernard's Certain Discourses, pp. 359—380.

is valuable for criticism and antiquity, but his views are far from the simplicity of the principles of the Reformation. He is not sound on justification by faith ; righteousness by faith in Christ has ever been *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.* Rom. ix. 30—33. Yet one golden sentence of his deserves recording—‘ O what a glorious thing, how rich a prize for the expence of a man’s whole life, were it, to be the instrument of rescuing one soul from ruin ! ’

Bishop SANDERSON is more correct in doctrine. His works, though not abounding with the grace of the gospel, do not, as far as we have read them, present views opposing that grace.* He was a man of great reflection and judgment, had much reputation as a casuist, and his works have many important discussions and decisions. He has been charged with contradictions and subterfuges in his casuistry, and though much allowance should be made for the peculiar times in which he lived, and the difficult cases brought before him, perhaps he cannot wholly be cleared of partiality, in favour indeed of a righteous cause : though that can never justify a partial course. Rom. iii. 8.

The writings of the pious, learned, and modest MEDE, who died in 1638, remain still invaluable monuments of sanctified learning, and a treasury of instruction, though later research has thrown fuller light on some parts of that deep and mysterious part of Scripture. He first laid open the method of the Book of Revelation, and led the way to that system of interpretation which in the main has been since adopted by the generality of Protestant Commentators.† He purposely abstained from any public state-

* His description of justifying faith is as follows—‘ First and most usually, especially in the Apostolical writings, the word faith is used to signify that Theological virtue or gracious habit whereby we embrace with our minds and affections the Lord Jesus Christ as the only-begotten Son of God, and alone Saviour of the world, casting ourselves wholly upon the mercy of God through his merits for remission and everlasting salvation. It is that which is commonly called a lively or justifying faith, whereunto are ascribed in Holy Writ those many gracious effects of purifying the heart, adoption, justification, life, joy, peace, salvation, &c. not as their proper and primary cause, but as the instrument whereby we apprehend Christ, whose merits and spirit are the true cause of all those blessed effects.’—Sermons, p. 60.

† Vitringa ably discusses and refutes some of Mede’s interpretations ; see also Dean Woodhouse.

ment that might appear to favour either the remonstrant, or contra-remonstrant views.*

Bishop TAYLOR is a writer of first-rate powers, with a fine imagination and much devotion, holiness, and humility. Yet he is too ascetic, and has too little of the good tidings of the gospel. Bishop Heber notices his defence of Episcopacy and the Liturgy as very powerful; his practical and devotional writings call forth his chief powers, and will ever make him acceptable to the pious mind. He fell into some of the Pelagian errors, and, like Warburton, did not consider the immortality of the soul revealed to the Patriarchs. It is also to be regretted that prayers for the dead have received countenance from some passages in his writings.

Many excellent divines on the continent, such as Zanchius, Junius, Pareus, Piscator, Spanheim, Amesius, &c.; and others in our own country, Greenham, Bishops Babington, Cowper, Andrews, &c.; Hieron, Downname, Whateley, &c. lived in this period. We pretend not to know all their writings, nor to defend all we do know; but have seen enough to be satisfied that much instruction is to be derived from them.

In the 17th and beginning of the 18th century the following writers flourished in the Lutheran Church, Calov, Schmedt, Hachspan, Walther, Glass, the Carpzoffs and others, of whom Mr. Rose says, 'their merits are proved by the fact, that their works are and ever will be, in the hands of the Theological Student.' Rose's State of Protestantism, p. 38.

* He thus describes justification—'An absolution or remission of sins by the only merits and satisfaction of Christ accepted for us, and imputed to us; an acquitting and cancelling of all bonds and obligations of transgression for Christ's sake, through the only merits of his death, passion, and shedding of his blood. For he that has right to Christ, has right in Christ to be partaker of his righteousness, and of whatsoever satisfaction he has undergone for the sins of mankind, whereby he is justified, that is, acquit before God of the guilt of sin, and of the punishment, according to the law due for the same. (2 Cor. v. 21. Rom. v. 19.) He afterwards scripturally shows the connexion between justification and sanctification. Mede's definition of justification scarcely seems to include *acceptance*, as well as pardon and acquittal, though the passages referred to comprehend this.

¹ See Works, p. 155.

The cultivation and advance of human learning was very great. The gigantic powers and talents, and extended learning, of such men as Bishops Andrews, Sanderson and Taylor, Drs. Jackson, John Smith, &c. (men who, with vast research, eloquence, and force of reasoning, maintained many great truths of Christianity, but, as we conceive, took, and defended as scriptural, a lower standing of evangelical doctrine than their predecessors) made this a distinguished era.* The works published manifest an extraordinary extent of learning. Our best Polyglot, by Walton, was prepared toward the close of this period, and published shortly after the Restoration. But with this growth of learning and refinement of doctrine on the one hand, there was a departure from the spirit of the gospel on the other, a losing sight or an adulteration of those grand and simple doctrines, which, experienced in the heart through the power of the Holy Ghost, constitute its essence.

The prejudice and bitterness of party writers in the latter part of this period is grievous ; and we see not how it is possible to come to just conclusions, on reading the controversialists and the historians only on one side. What is said, in Usher's life, respecting Dr. Heylin (who wished to establish his own views, as the sense of the Church of England, by the sentiments of bishops, whom he named, disregarding others who differed), 'it seems with the doctor, no bishop's opinions shall be orthodox, if they agree not with his own,' is but one indication of the spirit which such writers have manifested. Let the student then beware of trusting only to the representations of one side.

* Bishop Heber, speaking of Hooker, Taylor, and Barrow, thus distinguishes them : 'Of such a triumvirate, who shall settle the pre-eminence? Yet it may perhaps be not far from the truth to observe, that Hooker claims the foremost rank in sustained and classic dignity of style, in political and pragmatical wisdom ; that to Barrow the praise must be assigned of the closest and clearest views, and of a taste the most controlled and chastened ; but that in imagination, in interest, in that which more properly and exclusively deserve the name of genius, Taylor is to be placed before either. The first awes most, the second convinces most, the third delights and persuades most.' We would only add, Hooker was most correct in doctrine, Barrow most full in practical instruction, and Taylor most rich in devotional composition.

In giving an account of the period from 1603 to 1648, Villars, in his book on the influence of the Reformation, remarks, ‘ Désormais l’influence, au moins immédiate, de la Reformation cesse de s’y manifester. L’intérêt religieux n’est plus le principe dominant d’activité des cabinets.’ This can hardly be said to be the case either in Belgium or England. Indeed, in one respect, the less religion has to do with politics the better ; we mean as far as regards political domination, mere secularity, and making religion a stepping-stone to this world’s honours and dominion ; but in another respect, as it concerns conducting government on Christian principles, and largely providing means of grace, maintaining Christianity in its essentials, and promoting piety, the aid of government is scriptural and invaluable : *Kings shall be thy nursing fathers.*

On justification, the sentiments of the Reformed Church were hitherto in a great degree uniform. Bp. Barlow, a most competent judge, says, in his Two Letters to a Clergyman, ‘ Sure I am that no Reformed Church in Christendom, nor any learned divine of our own Church that I have yet met with, before the year 1640, ever admitted that sense of St. James’s words, which Popish or Socinian writers put upon them, or conceived them to be any proof of Justification, coram Deo, by our own works and inherent righteousness.’

SECTION V.

THE NONCONFORMISTS.

WE would take this term in a large sense, as comprehending all in our own country who, from the Reformation, disliked and separated from the Liturgy and ceremonies of the Established Church, till we come to modern times. It will be obvious that this class includes authors of very different sentiments and character, but our object is only to

give brief hints and sketches : otherwise the work would require to be extended to an indefinite length.

There is some difficulty in a clergyman of the Established Church giving a candid view of those from whom he conscientiously differs. The Author has, however, in introductory remarks to Matthew Henry's Commentary, expressed the sentiments which he holds, as to the extent in which real Christians agree. After noticing that a churchman would have little wisdom or candour, who could be prevented, by one or two instances of things which he might not wholly approve, from deriving much practical good, he there adds : ' The doctrines which he (M. Henry) maintains are those of the Church of England, and of the whole body of the Reformed Church ; and it is delightful to see and feel how large and spacious is the territory thus common to all Christians. It is the joy of every Christian heart to know that there are in all denominations which hold the head, even our Saviour Christ, sincere, and faithful, and beloved brethren ; and that the time will soon arrive when those lesser things, which have too long served to keep us asunder, shall be done away, and we shall dwell in our Saviour's presence for ever.'

When the errors of Popery had been exposed, and that whole system of corruption was laid aside, and a new system had to be established, there arose considerable differences of opinion about lesser things, which debate soon magnified and increased.

In the reign of Edward the Sixth, Bishop Hooper even did not like to wear the ordinary episcopal habits. In Queen Mary's reign, while divine grace was so eminently displayed in the maintenance of essential truths, under the very fires of persecution, in the same period the corruption of the heart was displayed in contentions about things indifferent. But in the main, it may be said of those who suffered unto death, that they agreed in doctrine and in a sweet spirit of love. Some of the exiles in Queen Mary's reign, driven to the continent by persecution, and seeing there that the Reformed Churches had not retained many

of the ceremonies and rites which had been continued in England, conceived a dislike for them. Great contentions arose about them. 'The Troubles of Frankfort,' (published in 1575, by one who had been present at them,) contains an affecting account of their differences. Who can but mark the subtilty and malice of the great adversary, when he prevailed so far, that exiles for Christ, in a foreign land, who agreed in all the essentials of religion, were induced eagerly to contend about mere circumstantialia?

These contentions did not cease on their return. Many wished for what they considered a more complete reformation. For a considerable time, the government dispensed with an entire conformity in various excellent ministers (such as Foxe and Coverdale), who had either suffered in Queen Mary's days, or were eminent for talents and learning.

There were others more averse to the rites and forms of the Church, beginning with Simpson and Humphries, and followed by Cartwright, Travers, and others, who yet ministered in the Church. There seemed to be no idea abroad yet of distinct congregations, or bodies of Christians separate from a National Church. Even Brown, the founder of the Brownists, died in the communion of the Church.

It seems astonishing that wise and holy men should have made divisions about things of so little real moment. If it be replied, 'It may seem equally astonishing that trifles were so peremptorily insisted on,' we allow that there is weight in such a reply; yet not so much weight as some may think. The powers that be, in the church as well as in the state, have a right to dictate; and trifles, though insignificant in themselves, may be important particles to the wholeness of a system. Of course the power of dictation, on one side, and the obligation of submission on the other, is bounded by conscience; only there are trivial points, not exactly squaring with every man's conscience, and which are not plainly against conscience,

which must be allowed on the ground of Christian forbearance : else how is any church to stand ? Unless we admit the possibility of a perfect church, and of perfectly enlightened consciences in all the several members of that church, its very perfections, by a distortion of vision not uncommon, may be considered imperfections.

The actual state of the Church may furnish a reason for what would otherwise seem inexplicable. The great mass of the nation, both ministers and laity, had hardly yet escaped from Popery, and the Papists were still every where numerous.* It was important for government, which must regard the whole body of subjects, not to give needless offence, by unnecessary alterations. Consider again the extreme difficulty of any human plan of instruction and worship free from all exceptions. It is said that when some complained to Lord Burleigh of the Liturgy, and stated that they only wished its amendment, not its removal, he asked them to make a better in the place of it ; one class of the complainants formed a new one, like that of Geneva ; another altered the new one in six hundred particulars ; a third quarrelling at the alteration, proposed a new model ; and a fourth dissented from all. How impossible is it to meet the wishes of all minds ! How needful, if we would have Christian union and love, to bear with one another ! Archbishop Tillotson mentions another case, where one congregation divided into thirty on different views of the two sacraments.†

Dr. Chalmers, speaking of Knox, has noticed one mistake common to all theologians of all denominations in that day, ‘ that Christianity could not flourish, nay that it could not exist save in the one frame-work of one certain and defined ecclesiastical constitution, and hence with us that there would be no light and no efficacy in the ministrations of the gospel, unless they were conducted according to the forms, and in the strict model and frame-work of the Presbytery.’ The same thing was seen among Epis-

* Bishop Madox’s Vindication ably shows this.

† See his Life, p. 332.

copalians. Surely, our ample experience in the history of the church, ought to raise us above this littleness of the carnal mind, to those higher regions which show us the true character and glory of the Christian church.

In the earlier part of this time there was no difference in doctrine. Bridges, the Dean of Salisbury in a Defence of the Establishment, published in 1587, after speaking of the deliverance of the nation from the great enemy, Popery, and the differences then arising among Protestants, respecting those differences says, 'The controversies between the common adversaries (the Papists) and us, are *pro aris et focus*, for matters, and that capital matters, of the substance and life of our Christian religion : not trifles as some neutrals would bear the people in hand. And therefore our adversaries in matters of religion are incensed against us with mortal or rather with immortal hatred. Whereas the controversies betwixt us and our brethren, are matters, or rather as they call them, but manners and forms of the church regiment.' The main standards of faith in these last were the same. He calls them afterwards, 'Mine own dear brethren in Christ, and her majesty's loyal and loving subjects.' Archbishop Hutton in 1604, observed in a letter to Lord Cranbourne, 'The Puritans, whose fantastic zeal I mislike, though they differ in ceremonies and accidents, yet they agree with us in substance of religion, and I think all or most of them love his majesty.'* The differences were therefore on the lesser points of religion, and if there was here, as we are ready to think there was, a needless pertinacity of refusal, was there not also a too minute and peremptory requisition of concession ?

Many (notwithstanding the vindication of the Reformers by Bishop Madox, and other similar works in answer to Neale) still think, that had more things been left indifferent, as kneeling at the Lord's table was in the second prayer-book of Edward the Sixth, or had the milder spirit of the gospel, rather than the unconstitutional and authoritative mandates of the star-chamber, more characterized

* Strype's Life of Whitgift, Vol. ii. p. 525.

the proceedings of Queen Elizabeth and those of subsequent reigns, much of the contentions, advancing in fierceness on either side till they issued in the rebellion, might have been prevented, and many of the divisions of the present day have been unknown. Man resists harshness and severity ; but yields to kindness and conciliation ; great firmness in maintaining essentials, and great union in them, are perfectly consistent with a measure of freedom about ceremonies and forms ; ‘ It is not necessary,’ says our 34th Article, ‘ that traditions and ceremonies be in all places one and utterly like.’ The spirit of this rule applies to churches in the same kingdom, as well as to different kingdoms.

As we recede from the Reformation, and pass along the 17th century, there were in our own country other concurrent, and perhaps more influential causes which increased the class of writers we are now considering.

The spirit of the Reformation declining in all parties, much mischief followed. Dean Milner observes of the times just before the rebellion : ‘ Too many of the clergy of those times appear to have had their minds only intent on the political advantages of the establishment.’ Those in authority lost the milder and more tolerant spirit of Cranmer, Grindal, and Abbot ; and a spirit of opposition to government, and a mingling of politics with religion, increased on the other side.

Wicked men took advantage of the times, to turn religious disputes to their own ambitious views ; to aggravate the mismanagement of rulers, and to stir up a fear of popery merely for their own advancement in influence and power. Hence there arose a political faction, meeting with, and provoked and increased by, the arbitrary measures of those in authority, which ultimately overturned the government. Lord Bexley justly describes it as ‘ the harsh exertions of ecclesiastical authority, often striving by means unjustified by the forms of the English law, and still more repugnant to its spirit, to repress the turbulence and ferment of a recent and unsettled reformation of religion, and the eager claims of undefined rights and privileges.’ These things

occasioned a conflict, and an unhappy issue of that conflict, which furnish to all sides a most instructive lesson.

Religious writers living in these times were more or less under their influence, and some of the class of which we now speak took a leading part in them. There were those who were eminent and holy men, and yet who seem to have forgotten that Christ calls upon us to honour the king, and reverence those in authority, that the weapons of Christians are not carnal, but spiritual; and that the church gains its victories, not by carnal weapons but by ardent prayer, lively faith, holy love and patient suffering. There were others again who were mere hypocrites and wild enthusiasts; and others who, under pretence of religion, sought only their own temporary wealth and aggrandizement. Thus a profession of, and alas, even real religion itself, became most unhappily associated with rebellion, and the mischief has been immense! Satan gained a great opportunity to raise a strong disgust against all religion. There were also among those who disliked the Church of England, many men of an evil and disloyal spirit.

Dr. Buchanan says, 'By the association of SANCTITY with the spirit of republicanism and rebellion, during the usurpation of Cromwell, that holiness of life which was enjoined by our Saviour, became a subject of scorn or contempt. The people passed over from one error to the contrary extreme. The bow was bent till the spring was broken, and it has never been rightly strung again. The nation being emancipated from a yoke which assumed a religious name, considered religion as its enemy; and thus the spiritual faith of Christ became connected with fanaticism or enthusiasm, and so it has remained in a great measure to this day. Political dissension, the most powerful engine in a free nation, has tended to keep this prejudice alive.'

We would here, in the spirit of love, suggest to Christians of every denomination, the inquiry whether experience does not manifest that a political spirit always siding against the powers that be, is most generally, if not inva-

riably, accompanied with a low ebb of vital religion ? The blessed Saviour cheerfully paid a tribute, when even unjustly demanded, that he might not offend. O that we all more rose to that high and dignified superiority of mind which led him to live in an atmosphere far above the things of this world.

It was not particular views of religion or discipline that wholly guided the political conduct of men. Generally, however, churchmen were on the King's side, and non-conformists on that of the Parliament, but there were exceptions. Calvinists and Arminians were on both sides without distinction. If there were many Calvinists for the Commonwealth, many were also strenuously for the king ; and some of the most decided Arminians, such as John Goodwin and Hugh Peters, went the farthest lengths in disloyalty, even openly to justify the atrocious murder of their king. It was painful to see this in Goodwin, whose learning was considerable, and whose piety, though we cannot but object to both his political and religious views, we should be sorry to question. His *Redemption Redeemed*, is perhaps as powerful a plea for Arminian views as has been published. It was also ably answered by Kendal, Owen, and others.

But many of the Puritans were eminently devout. They search the innermost conscience, rouse the careless, proclaim the free grace of the gospel and the righteousness of the Redeemer, and call to eminent holiness and devotion.

Admitting that there was much real religion in these troublous times, and in many cases in its highest degree, there was yet a great and serious drawback in the aggravated hypocrisy of some, the political spirit, the disputatious and controversial character, and the arbitrary measures of others. Baxter acknowledges that many unjustifiable things were done by the parliament and the ministers.*

In the preface to his *Golden Grove*, published during

* See his *Life*, p. 39.

the rebellion, after speaking highly of the former state of religion, Bishop J. Taylor says, 'But now instead of the excellency of condition and constitution of religion, the people are fallen under the harrows and saws of impertinent and ignorant preachers, who think all religion is a sermon, and all sermons ought to be libels against truth and old governors.'

Many excellent episcopal ministers, such as Bishop Taylor, Hales, Walton, &c., suffered harsh and severe treatment from the government of the commonwealth, and all the influence of Dr. Owen, Selden, and others, could not prevent the cruelties and injustice of violent parliamentary commissioners.* Yet were there still among those who did not conform to the Church of England, some who were peaceable, loyal, and attached to monarchy ; and the evils of the commonwealth at last seem to have led almost all to value the inestimable benefits of a limited monarchy like our own.

And after making, as we must make, the just abatements which facts call for, there was in the midst of those days a class of divines, whose writings remain imperishable monuments of sanctified talent, learning, and piety, and who have been followed by others down to our own days. No one can well read the practical writings of such Scotch Presbyterians as Guthrie and Dickson ; or the English Puritans, Cartwright and Burroughs ; or the Independents, Owen and Goodwin ; or the Nonconformists, Baxter, Manton, Bates, Howe, Flavel, Charnock, and the once despised Bunyan ; or more recent writers, as Henry, Grove, Earle, Grosvenor, and Bennett, without edification ; and in their works are some of the finest specimens of the workings of pious and powerful minds on the subject of religion, in our language. In general, in their writings,

* Walker's Sufferings of the Clergy, should be read along with Calamy's work on the other side. There is a remarkable account in Twells's Life of Pocock, prefixed to his works, of the harsh proceedings of the Commissioners against him, and the firm and successful interference of Dr. Owen in his behalf. It displays the character of the times. With how little reason and consistency could those who exercised these severities when they had power, complain under subsequent severities!

there is little interference with worldly politics, and but little, comparatively, with church government. Those living in the rebellion were too much carried away by it ; but after that unhappy season there was more separation from the world, great integrity, indefatigable industry, and a high-toned spirit of piety and devotion. Some were men of great learning. They clearly state the doctrines of the gospel, and guard them (some perhaps too much) on every side ; they minutely discriminate between the sincere and the hypocrite ; they were acquainted thoroughly with the workings of the human heart, and with the Holy Scriptures ; their expositions of which are full of valuable matter. When thrown out of the church, and kept by an unhappy policy in silence, they turned their leisure to the best advantage, in multiplying publications chiefly on practical devotion.

The character of the age was more scholastic than that of the Reformation, and in this view not so scriptural. The principles of the Reformers were tried and proved at the very stake : there was not equal distinctness, but there was more simplicity and unction.

A multiplication of distinctions and divisions in their discourses was a fault of the successors of the Reformers, and most of the earlier authors of whom we now speak fell into this fault, and multiplied divisions almost without end. Still their writings not only retarded the decline of religion, but maintained a spirit of deep piety, which they spread in America, as well as in this country.

Having given these general views of the character of this class of Divines, we will now enter more into particular points of controversy.

The just principles of TOLERATION were first fairly opened and discussed in these times, though they cannot be said to have been established till we come to the next period. The Fathers of the Christian church, for the first 800 years, perpetually assert, that no one should be compelled to a profession of faith ; * but on the rise of popery,

* See Barlow's Cases of Conscience, p. 81—89.

Christians seem to have lost sight of the right of private judgment, and to have considered uniformity and unre-served and entire submission to authority in religion requisite. Luther, indeed, maintained principles of toleration ; * but in general the Protestants, though themselves just delivered from papal tyranny, had not right views of toleration. Beza published a book on the punishing of heretics. The Puritans and the Presbyterians equally thought coercion in religion proper. The determined spirit of intolerance is quite a blot on some writers. The excellent Rutherford published in 1640 a 4to volume of 400 pages, intitled, 'Free Disputations against pretended liberty of Conscience ;' and Edwards another Treatise in 1647, intitled, 'The casting down of the last and strongest hold of Satan, or a Treatise against Toleration.' Bastwick's 'Utter Routing of the whole Army of Independents' in 1646 holds similar views. These very publications, however, show that Toleration was then making progress. In fact, the Brownists, the Dutch Arminians, and the Baptists seem to have led the way to better views. In 1644, and the following years, John Goodwin published just and important sentiments on this subject.

The ordinance of parliament in 1645, for establishing the Directory, shows the arbitrary spirit of the Presbyterians then in authority. The Prayer Book was not to be used even in private places and families, under penalties of fine and imprisonment. How soon they trod in the steps of those against whose steps they had risen—how little was real Toleration known by those pretending to superior religion†—and how justly did Milton feel his indignation roused by such proceedings ! ‡

* See Milner, Vol. v. p. 500.

† See Neale's History of Puritans, Vol. iii. p. 151. edition, 1822.

‡ Boyle, in a letter dated in 1646, says, 'The parliament is now upon an ordinance for the punishment of many of these supposed errors; but belief of their contrary truths is confessedly a work of Divine Revelation; why a man should be hanged because it has not yet pleased God to give him his Spirit, I confess I am yet to understand. Certainly to think by a halter to give new light to the understanding, or by the tortures of the body to heal the errors of the mind, seem to me like the applying a plaister to the heel to cure a wound in the head: it does not work on the seat of the disease.'—See Birch's Life of Boyle, p. 63.

Roger Williams, in 1644, published a work against persecution, intitled, 'The bloody Tenet of Persecution,' founded on a private letter of John Cotton the Independent, who published an answer against Williams in 1647, limiting toleration, intitled, 'The Bloody Tenet washed white,' and considering the question, 'how far liberty of conscience ought to be given to those that fear God, and how far restrained to persons that raze the foundations of godliness and disturb the civil peace?' &c.

Bishop Taylor, 1647, ably took up this subject, in his liberty of prophecy, as did Dr. Owen in 1649, in an appendix to a sermon; and gradually those better principles spread and prevailed, to which we owe so much of our present religious liberty and national prosperity, and comparatively few of those evils which were anticipated even by good men have arisen.

How little has intolerance done, even when most successful, for the real advantage of the intolerant church! Suppose such a church puts down all opposition, what is it but gaining an unrestrained liberty to be worldly, careless, irreligious, and ignorant? A deathlike sleep comes upon such a church; the glory of its best days is departed; it produces no more laborious divines; it suffers itself more than it inflicts, and multitudes of souls perish through the negligence which its very success has procured.

The trials and speeches of the Regicides exhibit an astonishing compound of {profession of religion, self-conceit, arrogance, and ignorance. But to attempt to charge their guilt upon even the Puritan religion, is as absurd as to charge the Reformation with the crimes of the men of Munster. The more wise and holy of the Puritans must not, because they lived in the same circle, be charged with the faults of the more extravagant: we might in that case charge even the disciples of Christ with the iniquity of Judas Iscariot. As there always has been hypocrites on the one hand, so on the other there have always been wild enthusiasts, who have disgraced all religion.* As

* Edwards' Gangræna published in 1646, gives a horrible picture of the

Buchanan remarks, 'Fanaticism proves nothing against religion. It is one of its diseases; and implies no more that there is no such thing as religion,—than madness, that there is no reason,—or distemper, that there is no health.' God permits such things to be a stumbling-block to those who desire it, that they may have a plausible excuse for infidelity and irreligion, and manifest that inward hatred which they bear to religion itself. Can any side consent to abide by the consequences of an opponent's giving the faults of individuals on that side as the character of the class? Where would be every class, if this partial rule were to be our criterion?

Various attempts have been made to unite the dissenters and the church of England in one communion without success. The Hampton Court Conference was held for this purpose in 1603,* and the Savoy Conference in 1661.†

The *Nonconformists*, after the restoration, were much more generally loyal than the Puritans of the Commonwealth. Time had dissipated false theories, and shown Christians the danger of interfering with this world's politics.

The *Covenanters* (so called from a convention agreed to by the Scotch in 1638 for maintaining their religion free from innovation) after the restoration suffered much for their peculiar principles as Presbyterians, zealous for the confession of the faith of the Scotch Church. Among these were some writers of much Scriptural knowledge.

On the accession of William III. measures were taken for effecting a comprehension, to include dissenters within the pale of the establishment, both by the king, the parliament, and the convocation.‡ Political views and dis-

state of the Sects in that time. He was a rigid Presbyterian, and very bitter against those who differed from that system. His statements cannot therefore be trusted.

* See Barlow's Account preserved in the Phoenix, Vol. II. p. 139.

† The particulars of this were given in various Tracts published at the time, collected in one volume, intitled, the History of Nonconformity. See also Collier's Ecclesiastical History, Vol. II. p. 878—886.

‡ An account is given of these in Nicholl's Defence of the Church of England, Calamy's Life of Baxter, Birch's Life of Tillotson, and several Pamphlets published on the occasion, as Vox Cleri, Vox Regis et Regni, and Answers.

sensions, and remaining suspicions, were the main impediments to its accomplishment, and thus the good men who from time to time projected it, were unable to effect one of the most desirable and apparently at these times practicable plans for uniting the great body of dissenters in the communion of one church. We say apparently practicable, and perhaps even so use too strong a term. For who can look back and fix his eye on any era, and say, this was a millennial day in the church, when Rom. xiv. and xv. were clearly understood by both parties, and were practically embodied in their spirit? Until that era, however disunion may and must be lamented, the evil will remain : when shall it be for ever lost in the blessed reign of perfect knowledge and perfect love ! *

* My friend Mr. Budd's remarks here so entirely concur with my own views, that I gladly quote them.

'I am most willing to admit, that dissent has not been unattended with advantage. It has been one means of preserving a holy seed among us, and we are greatly indebted to it for the maintenance of our civil and religious liberties; but then it should be equally admitted, and truth, I think, demands the admission, that these are not advantages flowing from Dissent, but rather expressions of divine mercy and love, the gracious providence of God overruling it for the production of good. The evil of disunion is necessary and certain : it is felt as a practical evil in most of our parishes throughout the land. It separates man from man, and Christian from Christian ; it prevents concert, and paralyses charitable effort, by distracting both our designs and performances, wastes our means, and reduces the order and moral agency of our admirable parochial system to confusion and inefficiency. Could all the decidedly religious in a parish combine with the minister in religious and charitable effort, in resisting abounding iniquity, and encouraging piety and order both in public and private, this communion of saints would, under God, exhibit so real and vital an excellence in Christianity, that the blessed result could not but be a general conviction of its excellence. It is the Devil's own maxim—"Divide and conquer." His grand object is to foster disunion, and to separate that he may destroy. When will our eyes be open to the wide-wasting malignity of this mischief? When will Churchmen aim at the largest comprehension, by correcting a discipline which they confess to be imperfect; by forbearing to insist on ceremonies which they allow to be indifferent; and by reforming abuses which they admit to be scandalous? And when will Dissenters abate excessive pretensions, give Churchmen credit for honest intentions, and while they admit the doctrinal excellences of our Church in essentials, forbear to magnify with uncharitable triumph her imperfections in circumstantialia? I have no hope that these evils will find any qualification in the means which have been hitherto adopted to correct them. It is not in legislative liberality, or in a renewed conference at Hampton Court or the Savoy, or in volumes of controversial discussion, that I conceive the remedy will originate; these will either be superseded as unnecessary, or will be the consequence of that better spirit they are undertaken to promote.' He then refers to the practical blessedness of the communion of saints, felt throughout the land, as the only effective means of uniformity.¹

¹ See his work on Baptism, p. 282, 283.

The style of the Puritan writers was unhappy : perplexed, mixed with various languages, great quaintness, endless divisions, and the general sense often lost sight of in giving all the meanings of the various words which composed it. Bishop Andrews is said, by his quaintness, to have led the way to the departure from the simplicity of the style of the Reformers, and Donne and many others followed in his steps.

Some of the leading characters demand more particular notice. That of Dr. Owen stands eminent in various respects. His devotional, and practical, and expository works are an invaluable treasure of divinity. It does not appear to me, that he took a wise or a Christian course, with regard to government : ministers should never direct the politics of this world. *Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth* : the minister's objects are higher. His character, and his decision to support the Protectorate, must have had a most unhappy influence in maintaining that usurpation. The defence set up for him falls short of a justification of his conduct, and it is better at once to acknowledge the error of an eminent servant of God, than justify him throughout. His sermon after the king's death would tend to strengthen Cromwell's hands, and he evidently had a close intimacy with that usurper. With this serious drawback on his character, and with the exception of his books in support of independency, which occupy but a small proportion of his voluminous works, we freely avow, that his writings are eminently spiritual, devotional, and edifying. He is full of Biblical learning, sound exposition of doctrine, acuteness, and information. His controversial writings against the Socinians and Papists, on the question of justification, on the Jewish Questions, Sabbath, &c., are valuable and important. There is hardly any modern controversy that he has not well digested and furnished matter for the defence of the truth. He gives expanded and rich views of the fulness of the gospel. His book on the 130th Psalm is a full display of evangelical forgiveness. The Christian familiar with the conflicting

exercises of experimental religion will be sensible of its value. It was a real service to the Church to have his works collected as they are (including the Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews) in 28 vols. 8vo., and they will furnish the Student with ample defences of the gospel against its various enemies. He was too minute and systematic in his distinctions for the largeness of scriptural truth ; but he enters into the deepest recesses of the heart, shows clearly the evangelical principles by which sin is to be subdued, and more minutely almost than any other writer displays the various details of holy and devotional feeling. He is here invaluable.

Baxter was another eminent divine of these times, of immense reading and writing also. Perhaps he ought not to be numbered among the Nonconformists. In some measure he was indeed led away by the politics of the times : yet, notwithstanding this and some of his controversial writings, and his Reformed Liturgy, this holy man, when silenced, continued to attend the established church. His practical writings are invaluable ; powerful, awakening, with deep views of eternity, and the most heavenly meditations on the future state. The defect of Baxter's practical, or rather *experimental* writings, was such as might be expected from his defects in doctrinal views. We do not now remember (even in his most glowing work, the Saints' Rest,) any very glowing views of the amazing love of Christ to the most sinful, and the freeness of his salvation. His method of peace to troubled consciences is circuitous and perplexed, instead of the direct road of simple and immediate faith. His Christian Directory is one of his most valuable works. His main power was in addresses to the conscience, in which he was probably more free and unfettered than most writers. His controversial writings are of various character. His Catholic Theology has much valuable information, and his reasons for the Christian Religion contain an able statement of the Evidences. He had to contend at first with Antinomians, who abused the gospel : he was a great pacificator, and

those things which, in one view, are the highest excellence of character, seem to have led him into most of his mistakes. From an anxious desire to unite all parties, and to guard most carefully against the abuse of the doctrines of grace, he departed from the simplicity of the gospel, and multiplied the very divisions, which we may well believe it was the desire of his heart to heal. Bishop Stillingfleet has well pointed out some part of his character. Speaking in favour of him to some who wanted to charge serious error upon him, he says, 'Some liberty must be allowed to metaphysical heads, to show their skill in distinctions above other men; and sometimes when there is no cause for them. But we must not presently charge men with heresy for new invented distinctions, wherein they may be allowed to please themselves; so that they do not cumber the faith with them, nor be too sharp upon their brethren for not apprehending the use of them.' Of his Aphorisms of Justification, his Confession of Faith, and his Treatise on the imputation of Christ's righteousness, Mr. Fuller of Kettering, gives the following views. He says, 'I find but little satisfaction in Mr. Baxter's Disputations on Justification. He says a great deal about it, distinguishing it into different degrees, pleading for evangelical works, as necessary to it.' 'Mr. Baxter considered Calvinists and Arminians as reconcileable, making the difference between them of but small account. The scheme of the Arminians appears to me to undermine the doctrines of salvation by grace alone, and resolve the difference between one sinner and another into the will of man, which is directly opposite to all my views and experience. Nor could I feel a union of heart with those . . . who hold with the gospel being a new remedial law, and represent sinners as contributing to their own conversion.' Doubtless Mr. Fuller, by union of heart, does not mean more than entire and cordial concurrence, and probably few would openly profess the words to which he objects. Much, very much, allowance is to be made for the darkness of human conception and expression in good men, and we may have

Christian communion with our brethren when we cannot concur in all their expressions.

Mr. Cecil says, 'Baxter surpasses all others in the grand, impressive, and persuasive style ; but he is not to be named with Owen, as to furnishing the student's mind. He is, however, multifarious, complex, practical.' *

It is painful to see two such eminently holy men, and useful writers, as Owen and Baxter, writing against each other as they do. With a conviction, agreeing with Mr. Cecil, (that Owen is much nearer the truth in doctrine) it is yet painful to see Owen so severely handle such a man as Baxter, and to see Baxter's recriminations. One is only comforted in the thought of their perfect union above, in together magnifying the riches of that grace which has covered all their asperities. What a lesson may such differences teach us of ceasing from man ! We learn similar lessons in the disputes of good men, on points of discipline as well as doctrine.

But it is impossible to enlarge on each individual. Mr. Hervey sums up their respective characters with happy discrimination. '*Dr. Owen*, with his correct judgment and immense fund of learning : *Mr. Charnock*, with his masculine style and inexhaustible vein of thought : *Dr. Goodwin*, with sentiments truly evangelical, and a most happy talent at opening, sifting, and displaying the hidden riches of scripture ; these are, I think, the first three. Then come *Mr. Howe*, nervous and majestic, with all the powers of imagery at his command : *Dr. Bates*, fluent, polished, with never-ceasing flow of beautiful similitudes : *Mr. Flavel*, fervent and affectionate, with a masterly hand at probing the conscience and striking the passions ; *Mr. Caryl*, *Dr. Manton*, *Mr. Pool*, with many others whose works will speak for them ten thousand times better than the tongue of panygyric, or the pen of biography.'

The missionary spirit of the Protestant Church (at least

* Mr. Cecil observes in his *Remains*, 'There is something so remarkable in the genius and spirit of the gospel, that it is not to be understood by any force of speculation and investigation. Baxter attempted this method, and found it vain.'

as far as regards our own country, (for some efforts had been previously made from Switzerland and Sweden, and by the Dutch in Ceylon and other islands), commenced with the labours of Eliot (justly called the Apostle of the Indians), who arrived in New England in 1632. He acquired the native English, and began preaching to them in 1646. The scattered state of the Indians being the chief impediment to their instruction; large collections were made in every parish in England, and in 1649 an ordinance was made in parliament for propagating the gospel.

On the restoration in 1661, through the efforts of Baxter, Ashurst, and Boyle, the king founded a new corporation, under the name of the Company for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England; and land, bought with the former collections, was permanently settled on this corporate society, of which Boyle was the President, and Ashurst the Treasurer. Boyle, himself, in his own conduct, set the precedent of those Bible and Missionary exertions which have since so increased. Holland and Denmark followed the example of England.*

The Society formed in 1662 being confined to New England and its neighbourhood, and not meeting the wants of other countries; another charter was granted in 1701 for the formation of another Society on a larger scale, called the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Dr. Stanley, Bishop Compton, and Archbishop Tenison seem to have been mainly instrumental in obtaining this charter.

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, (at first chiefly confining its labours at home,) had been formed in 1698, by friends who heartily joined also in the chartered Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

In the pious language of Niecamp, God 'inspired Frederick IV. with the truly royal purpose of using the power divinely entrusted to him in endeavours to promote the eternal salvation of the miserable Pagans,' and in 1705 he

* Particulars will be found in Baxter's Life, pp. 290—297; Millar's Propagation, Vol. ii. pp. 296—314; Humphrey's Account, pp. 5, 6; Mather's Magnalia, pp. 170—211; Birch's Life of Boyle, pp. 140, 141. Birch gives the charter, pp. 319—335.

sent to India two missionaries, Henry Plutschoff and Bartholomew Ziegenbalg. They arrived at Tranquebar, July 9, 1706, and this mission was subsequently aided and supported by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.*

It is pleasing to observe these first beginnings of that spirit, which is one of the highest results of scriptural divinity—a spirit of labour to make the light of the gospel shine in every land—a spirit which, through Divine mercy, is now more and more spreading through the Christian Church.†

SECTION VI.

THE DIVINES OF THE RESTORATION AND REVOLUTION.

On the restoration of Charles II. to the throne of his ancestors, from which he had been so long and so unjustly kept, the state of parties was completely changed. The Church of England recovered its privileges, and regained its power and influence ; but not alas ! in the spirit of the Reformation.

Unhappily the severities which churchmen had endured, enkindled feelings of distrust and enmity ; and great severities were in turn exercised against the Nonconformists. Reasonable concessions were refused ; and, however we may discern a moral retribution on the part of God towards some of those who suffered, we can never justify the conduct of those who inflicted the punishment. Lord Clarendon attempts to defend it by two alleged instances of want of ingenuity and integrity ; but Bishop Heber justly remarks, ‘ The duplicity or bigotry of a few leading individuals can be no good argument against using all just and reasonable means to conciliate a numerous and powerful party, the majority of whom must be like other men,

* Farther accounts will be found in “*Niecampi Historia Missionis*,” &c., 4to. 1737 ; and in the “*Propagation of the Gospel in the East*,” three parts, 1718, 12mo.

† Full accounts of the progress of the Missions will be found in Brown’s *History of the Propagation of the Gospel*, and Smith’s *History of Missions*.

to be subdued by kindness, and satisfied when their complaints are attended to.' *

The sad Bartholomew-day of 1662, saw, it is said, 2000 ministers cast out of the Church of England; most of whom might probably have been retained within its pale by a conciliatory spirit. We fully admit, that it gave evidence of the power and reality of religious principle in those, who for conscience' sake, gave up their means of livelihood; and of the little advance that the spirit of peace and toleration had yet made in the minds of those who, for the lesser things of religion, could make such a cruel sacrifice. But both sides must be looked at. Sir M. Hale said, 'those of the separation were good men, but they had narrow souls, or they would not break the peace of the church for such inconsiderable matters as the points in difference were.' Had not *scrupulosity* as well as tenderness of conscience considerable influence with the non-conformists in this sad matter?—Was there not want of forbearance on one side, as well as intolerance on the other? Yet there was no adequate excuse for the high ruling party. When apprehension was expressed that the terms of conformity were so hard that many would not comply, Archbishop Sheldon replied, 'He was *afraid* they would;' and when another said, 'It is pity the door is so strait'—he answered, 'It is no pity at all:—if we would have thought so many of them would have conformed we would have made it straiter!'

It is observable, that many of the Non-conformists seemed to get over, or at least not to stumble at what are now considered the main difficulties, while they were burdened by things which are now little felt: such as the use of a surplice, or a form of prayer, which some would have laid down their lives to have had removed.† Surely the weak conscience might, with singleness and simplicity before God, bear such things, rather than throw the minister out of an important sphere of usefulness, in his Master's

* See Life of Taylor, p. 243.

† See Mather's *Magnalia*, Book iii. 113.

service. Baxter himself, after fully stating the faults of this ruling party, speaks with much piety and candour of the faults of the suffering party.*

It was, however, a lamentable state of things, when in a Christian country, the highest acts of religion, social prayer, and praise, and Christian instruction, were treated as worse crimes than open violations of the plain law of God ; and to be religious, was almost considered as synonymous with rebellion.

In the wonderful providence of God, however, the good men who were prevented from the exercise of their ministry, improved their leisure to the production of valuable, practical, and devotional Treatises, which have been preserved as the food of the spiritual church, in subsequent ages, by the Divines whom we have noticed in the preceding Section. It shows that a good man can be thrown into no situation in which he may not be a blessing.

We shall have to notice a very serious decline in the religious character of the writings of this æra. There were some illustrious exceptions, and the Christian eye dwells with delight on such Bishops as Leighton, Reynolds, Hopkins and Beveridge in the Established Church, as well as on many other names that might be mentioned in other communions.

We now proceed to the character of Writers of the Established Church at the Restoration, and Revolution, and succeeding period. The History of Divinity, in the century from the Restoration, to the middle of the 18th century, is by no means cheering to the Christian eye, though it furnishes many a caution, and much valuable instruction. Let us trace it in its progress.

The hypocrisy of many, and the extreme views of others who made a profession of religion ; their violence, their extravagances, their ambition ; and the dead formality and bad taste of others, gave occasion for all sorts of offences ; religion became the laughing stock of the wits, and hateful to multitudes. Religion triumphs by patient

* See his Works, Vol. xiv. pp. 149, 150.

suffering ; but unsanctified elevation, self-conceit, hypocrisies, ambition and domination, and lording it over others, ever impede its progress.

It was under these circumstances that the Church of England was situated in the days of Charles II. It was too evident, that the great effusion of the blessed Spirit, which had produced the pure and spiritual churches of the Reformation, had began to fail, and worldliness, and indifference, and spiritual death succeeded. The infidelity and profligacy of the court of the reigning monarch accelerated the course of irreligion through the country.

We shall better form a judgment, however, of the class of Divines that succeeded, by considering the statements of different writers. Bishop Burnet was one of that class. Dr. Tuckney saw its rise, and corresponded with one of its earliest promoters. Their respective accounts are subjoined in notes.*

* After complaining of the ease, sloth, and negligence of the restored clergy, Bishop Burnet, in the History of his own Times, says—‘If a new set of men had not appeared of another stamp, the church had quite lost her esteem over the nation. These were generally of Cambridge, formed under some Divines, the chief of whom were Drs. Whichcot, Cudworth, Wilkins, More, and Worthington. *Whichcot* being disgusted with the dry systematical way of those times, studied to raise those who conversed with him to a nobler set of thoughts, and to consider religion as a seed of a deiform nature [to use one of his own phrases]. In order to this he set young students much on reading the ancient philosophers, chiefly Plato, Tully, and Plotinus, and on considering the Christian religion as a doctrine sent from God both to elevate and sweeten human nature. *Cudworth* carried this on with great strength of genius and a vast compass of learning. *Wilkins* joined with those who studied to propagate better thoughts, to take men off from being in parties, or from narrow notions, from superstitious conceits, and a fierceness about opinions. He was a great observer and promoter of experimental philosophy. *More* was an openhearted and sincere Christian philosopher, who studied to establish men in the great principles of religion against Atheism. *Worthington* was a man of eminent piety and great humility, and practised a most sublime way of self-denial and devotion.’

After alluding to the publication and spread of Hobbes' *Leviathan*, Burnet goes on—‘So this set of men at Cambridge, studied to assert and examine the principles of religion and morality on clear grounds, and in a philosophical method. In this *More* led the way to many that came after him. All these and those who were formed under them studied to examine farther into the nature of things than had been done formerly. They declared against superstition on the one hand, and enthusiasm on the other. They loved the constitution of the church and the Liturgy, and could well live under them, but they did not think it unlawful to live under another form. They wished that things might have been carried with more moderation ; and they continued to keep a good correspondence with those who differed from them in opinion, and allowed a great freedom both in philosophy and divinity, from whence they were called men of latitude. And upon this, men of narrower thoughts

Bishop Burnet has many valuable, very valuable qualities as a Divine. His pastoral care was exceedingly useful, but his religion was injured, and his spiritual character greatly lowered, by engaging as he did in worldly politics : though the friend of Leighton, he falls vastly short of Leighton's unction and spirituality. His views of this school will tend to awaken the fears of an evangelical mind, alive to the danger of false philosophy : (Col. ii. 8.) they are the views of a partial and attached friend, one of the class which he describes : a class undoubtedly worthy of the Student's attention, and from which much, directly and indirectly, may be learned. The improvements, however, which these excellent men introduced, by no means compensated for their defects of evangelical statements, and their keeping in the back ground the peculiar doctrines

and fiercer tempers fastened upon them the name of Latitudinarians.¹ They read Episcopius much, and the making out the reasons of things being a main part of their studies, their enemies called them Socinians. They were all very zealous against popery.

'The most eminent of those who were formed under those great men I have mentioned were Tillotson, Stillingfleet, and Patrick. *Tillotson* had the brightest thoughts and the most correct style of all our Divines, and was esteemed the best preacher of the age. He was eminent for his opposition to popery. *Stillingfleet* was a man of much more learning, but of a more reserved and haughtier temper. He applied himself much to the study of the law, and records, and original of our constitution. *Patrick* was a great preacher. He wrote much, and well, and chiefly on the Scriptures. *Lloyd* of Oxford was formed by Bishop Wilkins, and went into most of their principles, but went far beyond them in learning, and was a great critic. *Tenison* was a very learned man, and took much pains to state the notions and practices of heathenish idolatry, and so to fasten the charge on the church of Rome. They took much pains to observe all the common errors of language.

'This set of men contributed more than can well be imagined to reform the way of preaching ; which, among the Divines of England before them, was overrun with pedantry, a great mixture of quotations from fathers and ancient writers, a long opening of a text with the concordance of every word in it, and a giving all the different expositions, with the grounds of them, and the entering into some parts of controversy, and all concluding in some, but very short, applications, according to the subject. This was both long and heavy.

'The style of the Discourses of these men was generally clear, plain and short ; they cut off unnecessary shows of learning, and applied themselves to the matter, in which they opened the nature and reason of things so fully, and with that simplicity, that their hearers felt an instruction of another sort than had commonly been observed before. So they became very much followed ; and a set of these men brought off the city in a great measure from the prejudices they had formerly to the Church.'

¹ There is an account of the origin of this name in a Tract published in 1662, reprinted in the *Phoenix*, Vol. ii. p. 499.

of the gospel. Bishop Burnet has selected some of the best writers of his views ; there were also men of inferior minds, violent high Churchmen, who would so have pressed their views, as to have brought all into confusion.

At the end of Dr. Whichcot's Aphorisms, there is the correspondence between him and Dr. Tuckney, which has been already referred to, and which throws considerable light on the kind of divinity, which was then becoming popular.*

The danger of giving up scriptural expressions, in exchange for those we think less offensive, is very great, and the presumption very daring. Witsius speaks justly against the over-refined delicacy of giving up phrases of scripture

* Dr. Tuckney, in his Letter to Whichcot, 1651, speaks of Drs. Jackson and Hammond as learned men, but the first sufficiently obscure, and both too corrupt ; and then talks of Whichcot's being cast into the company of very learned and ingenious men at Cambridge, who, he says, 'I fear at least some of them, studied other authors more than the Scriptures ; and Plato and his scholars above others. Hence, in part, hath run a vein of doctrine which divers very able and worthy men, whom from my heart I much honour, are known by. The power of nature in morals too much advanced. Reason has too much given to it in the mysteries of faith. A recta ratio much talked of, which I cannot tell where to find. Mind and understanding is all ; heart and will little spoken of. The decrees of God questioned and quarrelled with ; because, according to our reason, we cannot comprehend how they may stand with his goodness, which, according to your phrase, he is under the power of. Those, our Philosophers, and other heathens, made fairer candidates for heaven than the Scriptures seem to allow of, and they, in their virtues, preferred before Christians, overtaken with weaknesses. A kind of moral divinity minted, only with a little tincture of Christ added ; nay, a Platonic faith unites to God. Inherent righteousness so preached, as if not with the prejudice of imputed righteousness, which has sometimes very unseemly language given it, yet much said of the one, and very little or nothing of the other. This was not Paul's manner of preaching. This inherent righteousness may be perfect in this life. An estate of love in this life above a life of faith. And some broad expressions, as though in this life we may be above ordinances : with divers other principles of religion, by some very doubtfully spoken of.'

In another Letter, in Oct. 1651, Dr. Tuckney says, 'Would you and some others as fully and as frequently insist on free justification, by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, as you and they do on inherent holiness and righteousness, that no disservice may be done to that by pressing of this ; matter of complaint would be prevented : but when this is insisted upon ; with the slighting terms of notions and speculations given to the other when contended for ; to me it is just matter of offence.'

To these charges Whichcot replies at some length, and wards off some of them, but seems to lose sight of the all-important fact that Christian practice can only flow from Christian principles, and to forget that nothing but the cross of Christ furnishes an adequate motive for that very devotedness to God and self-government, and justice, and truth, which he would almost exclusively press. His replies, indeed, in this respect, prove that Dr. Tuckney's charge was not without foundation. Experience has abundantly shown that the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, however they may be abused by hypocrites, are alone efficacious to the holy and heavenly life of the real Christian.

for our own fancied smoother and more judicious expressions.*

Robert Hall observes, with his accustomed terseness, 'If it be inquired, Why adhere to an offensive term when its meaning may be expressed in other words, or at least by a more circuitous mode of expression? the obvious answer is, that words and ideas are closely associated, and that though ideas give birth to terms, appropriate terms become in their turn the surest safeguard of ideas, insomuch that a truth which is never announced but in a circuitous and circumlocutory form, will either have no hold, or a very feeble one on the public mind. The anxiety with which the precise, the appropriate term is avoided, bespeaks a shrinking, a timidity, a distrust with relation to the idea conveyed by it, which will be interpreted as equivalent to its disavowal.† We would press this point, because of our strong conviction of the many evils of giving up scripture phraseology. The thing escapes with the term, or is deepened or otherwise in the impression of its importance according to the strength or weakness of the term employed to designate it. What words did Paul use to preach the gospel; 1 Cor. ii. 1, 4, 13. The original cast of the truth of Revelation, naturally seems to require a corresponding originality in the mode of expression through which they are communicated, in order that the ideas intended to be conveyed by them, may as far as possible be precise and determinate.

My much valued friend Mr. Pratt has made some remarks illustrating the character of the divinity of this era, which are worthy of deep consideration.‡

* *Animadversiones Irenicæ*, cap. 1.—'Cujus castissimas, sapientissimas, maximeque emphaticas locutiones, nostris nescio quibus lenioribus emollire velle, animi est perperam delicati, neque sapientiæ sacrarum literarum justum suum pretium statuentis.'

† See difference between the baptism of John and Christ, p. 67.

‡ Speaking of Bishop Hopkins, in the *Life* prefixed to his works, he says, 'He was one of the last of that sound race of divines to which the Reformation gave birth; and who, in uninterrupted succession, had maintained in the episcopal chair the genuine doctrines of the scriptures and of the church. Bishop Hopkins and his contemporary Bishop Beveridge had scarcely any eminent successors of equal, or nearly equal rank, for many years, who un-

The agitations consequent on the Restoration were succeeded, as Bishop Heber has remarked, 'by a school of literature and composition, of all others which the country has seen, the least favourable to genius, and the most unlike that style of thinking and expression which had distinguished Jeremy Taylor and his contemporaries.*'

Dr. Buchanan viewed the subject more with reference to spiritual religion. In a sermon preached at Cambridge, he takes a review of the Protestant Church in this country.†

equivocally and openly held and inculcated the pure doctrines of the Reformation.' After noticing the tendency to deterioration, he proceeds, 'The scholastic and inelegant manner of exhibiting Christian doctrines which had generally prevailed, became unfashionable: a more easy and polished style was introduced, and some good men were not aware of the caution which should be observed on such a subject: old terms were to make way for terms less offensive: truths were rather to be explained than the complex words which denoted them continued: fundamental doctrines were to be reduced within as narrow a compass as possible, and a liberal spirit was to be cultivated.'

'In the correspondence between Drs. Tuckney and Whichcot,' which has been already quoted, Mr. Pratt says, 'The tenets and feelings of the old and new school are fully developed by men of piety and sagacity; and clear indications will be seen of that insensible departure from divine truth, which increased during the subsequent years. Their project (that of the new school) as far as legitimate, was doubtless a noble one, but it was difficult to be accomplished; and the attempt required a clear discernment of the distinguishing truths of the gospel, a deep impression of their paramount importance, and both the inclination and the skill gracefully to interweave them as the principles and motives of all action. In such qualifications these good men had not the pre-eminence requisite for their undertaking. While therefore we find in their manner an admirable improvement on the pedantry of the preceding age, and in their matter numberless engaging and elegant displays of the evidences of Christianity, and of the grandeur and beauty of its precepts, we are seldom roused and invigorated to action by its distinguishing doctrines: that life and energy which emanate from the doctrines connected with the fall and recovery of man, and which are appropriate to Christianity alone, too often yield to motives drawn from the schools of philosophy: and the fitness, beauty, and expediency of religion and virtue take place of the authoritative will of God and the gracious provisions of the gospel.' He considers that Bishop Hopkins united the truth of the old school with the elegance of the new. But, perhaps, even in Bishop Hopkins, though the glad truths of the gospel are forcibly defended, some will wish they were more sweetly and fully exhibited as in Leighton, Bradford, Foxe, and the Reformers.

* See Life of Taylor, p. 155.

† He says, 'The light of divine truth continued to shine in the Protestant Church for a long period, with some intermission indeed, and, in certain churches, more intensely than in others. But it shone in some places as brightly, and probably endured as long, as ever it did in any period of the Primitive Church. At length, however, by the combined operation of causes which are well known, a spirit of indifference to religious truth began to manifest itself, not only in the established and national churches, but among all other denominations of Christians. It is difficult to say where there was most apathy and languor. For though the form of sound words was still

The extreme importance of the subject, the justice of many of the remarks which have been quoted, and the difficulty of giving an opinion on matters which concern men of such character, learning and piety, will justify the length of the quotations which have been made.

We would now notice more distinctly individual writers. Some maintained the high standard of the Reformation. Bishop Hopkins has already been noticed.

Bishop Reynolds died in 1676. He is a writer of great value, and deep piety and experience. His sentences are astonishingly terse and full of matter, and his doctrine is throughout, evangelical, spiritual, and holy. His commentary on the 14th of Hosea is particularly excellent. His works have been lately republished. They are a great treasure.

Archbishop Leighton died in 1684. He is one of the very first divines of the British Church ; and his writings breathe throughout the spirit of devotion : they are distinguished by a noble strain of deep piety, a most humble, heavenly, and loving spirit, an elegant mind, and a scriptural standard of evangelical doctrine.

Bishop Beveridge died in 1708. He himself published only his more learned works, his Catechism, and one or two small pieces : but his executors published many volumes of Sermons, his Private Thoughts, &c., never in-

generally retained (in our own church in a *written* form, in other churches, in an *extempore* form), and there were some eminent examples of piety and laudable zeal : yet it was most evident that in many places religion was sinking very fast into a lifeless profession, and that in some places it merely exhibited the body and external figure. Even among those denominations of Christians who were once distinguished by a name derived from purity, little fruit was to be found.... And not only was the spirit of religion nearly extinguished, but men began to be ASHAMED of their religion. All this while science and human learning were progressive, but the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures was passing away. The Hebrew language which is the source of all critical knowledge of the Bible [of the New Testament as well as the Old], became at length but little known even to learned men. And though there ever have been illustrious exceptions, it ceased at last to form a part of the ordinary studies of our youth, at our seats of learning, even of those students who were destined for the sacred office.'

'Out of this state of things arose a new enemy to the church ; the enemy that might be expected, INFIDELITY ; or the positive denial of the truth of a revelation from God. Superstition first shut the Bible. The second attempt was made by Infidelity.'

tended for the press. The whole of his English works have been correctly edited by Mr. Hartwell Horne. His *Private Thoughts* have been of inestimable service to the Church, from the deep piety and devotion and evangelical sentiments of this excellent bishop.

The Christian Student may also be farther assisted by a more particular consideration of some leading divines of the school which we have been considering.

Archbishop Tillotson, in his private character, seems to have been remarkably sincere and upright,* open and generous, bearing reproaches patiently, longing for the union of the churches of Christ, charitable, and above ambition and the love of money. Far would we be from throwing any doubt on his personal piety ; his very excellences are the reason why it is necessary to advert to his erroneous views. His writings are singled out, with those of Chillingworth, by Mr. Locke, as eminent examples of perspicuity. He seems to have been early prejudiced against preaching the doctrines of Christianity. When he was at Kiddington, in Suffolk, the parish universally complained that Jesus Christ was not preached among them—he meets such an accusation in his sermon on Titus iii. 2. ‘I foresee what will be said, because I have heard it so often said in the like case, that there is not one word of Jesus Christ in all this. No more there is in the text ; and yet I hope that Jesus Christ is truly preached, whenever his will and laws and the duties enjoined by the Christian religion are inculcated upon us.’† Here was his grand mistake ; and the connection of his texts, both in the close of the former, and the following verses, might have shown him that his view was not correct. We do not preach Jesus Christ merely by preaching his laws. He is far more than a Lawgiver ; while his laws derive immense energy and force from his atonement, and are eminently effective through his grace. His views on jus-

* Two of his expressions are admirable : ‘I cannot endure a trick any where, much less in religion.’—‘Let us never do any thing for religion that is contrary to it.’

† See his *Life*, p. 28.

tification (See his Sermon on Justifying Faith) are far from the views of our Reformers. After reading it, we are less surprised at Milner's strong expression, 'Grotius, on the continent, and Tillotson in our own island, with their numerous followers, corrupted it (justification by faith) with all their might.*' He objected to the Athanasian Creed.† His sermon on the eternity of hell-torments is seriously objectionable, as trifling with the plain declarations of scripture. He seems to have been misled by Episcopius,‡ whose writings Tillotson's biographer asserts, contributed much to the forming of some of the greatest divines of our country, in the age of which we speak. Did they not rather contribute to injure and deteriorate the divinity of this age? His low views of sacrifices have been justly commented on by Archbishop Magee.§ It is the general withholding of the all-enlivening and vivifying doctrines of the gospel, and frequent statements which tend another way, (statements to which the excesses of former times seems to have given rise,) that form our grand objections to the divinity of Tillotson. He speaks of faith, repentance, and purposes of sincere obedience, as conditions before justification; as making us capable of, qualifying us for, and, recommending us to, the favour of God. See Sermons on John xx. 31, towards the beginning, and 5th Sermon on Gal. vi. 15, towards the end. We need not say, how directly such statements militate against our 13th Article. But at times clearer light breaks out. His writings against Atheism, Socinianism and Popery are valuable. He allows the first beginning of good in man to be of God's grace, saying, 'But when I say this grace is derived to us from our union with Christ, I do not intend to exclude the necessity of God's grace and Holy Spirit to

* Milner's Works, Vol. viii. 413.

† See his Life, p. 315.

‡ It is painful to see how that writer seeks to attenuate and lower the awful and tremendous threatenings of God's word, on this subject. See Episcopii Opera, Vol. I. *Reponsio ad Questiones*, pp. 67, 68.

§ Tillotson's discourses against the Socinians contain some valuable remarks; and one cannot but discern the divine mercy which permitted such a heresy to bring back men like Tillotson to more scriptural principles.—See Discourses on the Atonement, Vol. ii. p. 219–231.

the conversion of a sinner and his first planting in Christ : and sometimes he lets the grandeur of his subject burst through the dulness * of his ordinary writing, as in the following passage : ‘Blessed God and Saviour of mankind, what shall we render to thee for such mighty love, for such inestimable benefits as thou hast purchased for us, and art ready to confer upon us ?’ &c.

Dr. Barrow is a superior writer in the same school.†

The powers of his mind were of the highest order ; and in his sermons on the passion of Christ, and on his incarnation, we have very able statements of the fundamental truths of the gospel ; and his treatise on the Pope’s Supremacy, has been said to be the most valuable on that topic in the English language. In his sermons on Faith there are some magnificent passages ; but there are others in which we cannot concur, though he distinctly acknowledges it to be a fruit of the Spirit. In his Sermon on Justifying Faith, he speaks of God’s being, by Christ, become reconciled, ‘so as generally to proffer mercy, upon certain reasonable and gentle terms, to all that shall sincerely embrace such overtures of mercy, and heartily resolve to comply with those terms required by him ;—namely, the returning and adhering to him, forsaking all impiety and iniquity, and constantly persisting in faithful obedience to his holy commandments.’ This is not the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. Who shall be saved on the terms of constantly persisting in faithful obedience to his holy commandments ?

In the general strain of sentiment, there is, it appears to the Author, a material departure from the character of scriptural divinity. Compare an epistle of St. Paul’s and a writer of this class, and you appear to be in another atmosphere. A few remarks on Barrow’s Sermons in Industry will illustrate this view. These are admirable sermons as comprehending a very valuable mass of weighty

* Bishop Heber calls it, ‘the dull good sense of Tillotson.’ The expression is perhaps too strong. See Tillotson’s first sermon in his Works.

† Robert Hall has some excellent remarks on Barrow and Tillotson. See his Reviews, p. 140—143.

and important motives for industry in general, and in our callings as Christians, scholars, and gentlemen. It is a book which may be read through more than once with much advantage ; almost every topic relating to the subject seems discussed, and almost every text quoted, but we see not evangelical motives fully developed. The love of Christ, the grand impelling spring of ceaseless activity, and devotedness to him, the grand rule of all industry, is by no means clearly stated, or powerfully pressed. The beauty, the advantages, and the excellence of industry to the attainment of every thing valuable, it is true, are put in a thousand instructive forms, and here and there a gospel principle and scriptural examples, are briefly adverted to, but there is vastly more of the views of gospel truth in the texts of scripture that he quotes, than in many pages of his own matter. Classical authors are quoted by him almost in the same way that he would quote an inspired writer. What Augustine says of Cicero, one is ready to say of him, though certainly in a far more restricted degree ; we cease to be captivated by him, because the name of Christ does not occur in him. The name of Christ does occur in Dr. Barrow, though far more rarely in these sermons than the Christian would desire ; and in such a sermon as his on the Passion, we are glad to sit at his feet and learn the very best lessons.

The learning and the judgment of STILLINGFLEET, who died in 1699, were very eminent. His works, in 6 vols. folio, better deserve reprinting than some that have been reprinted. His pieces against Popery are quite an arsenal, furnishing the Protestant with ample armour for repelling the attacks of the subtle and often learned Romanists. Stillingfleet sometimes breaks out in fine evangelical sentiments ; but in general rather dwells on the outworks than displays the glory of the interior.

The character of other authors of this period will be seen in noticing the general course of divinity.

One of the happy circumstances of this age was the establishment of the invaluable principle of the full TOLERA-

tion of religion in all things, that do not interfere with the peace of society ; that principle was never before so fully and generally understood, and we are greatly indebted to the celebrated Locke for its elucidation.

It will have been seen that some efforts had been made in the previous age ; but the severities after the restoration show with what little success. The moderation of such divines as we have noticed, was favourable to the introduction of this principle, and the sufferings which in their turn every side had passed through from the ruling powers, led men to better views. In his banishment just before the revolution in 1688, Locke was led to the consideration of this subject, and published his invaluable letter on Toleration, in 1689. It was, as might be expected, opposed ; and the controversy was continued in subsequent letters till 1706. Many exceedingly disliked it.

South, in a sermon on Gal. ii. 5, said to be preached at the close of the 17th century, after giving his view of the evils of a comprehension, says, ‘ But from comprehension, let us pass on to toleration ; that is, from a plague within the church, to a plague round about it. And is it possible for the church to continue sound, or indeed so much as to breathe, in either of these cases ? Toleration is the very pulling up of the flood-gates, and breaking open the fountains of the great deep, to pour in a deluge of wickedness, heresy, and blasphemy, upon the church.’ *

Such an extract shows with what difficulty, the right of private judgment in religion, and the complete recognition of the principles of toleration, were established. But South’s spirit was embittered against dissenters : and though there are admirable appeals to the conscience, and his statement of doctrine is generally more scriptural than that of many of this age, and he is a clear, and often forcible writer, yet his bitterness must have irritated and provoked, and his habit of jesting in his discourses cannot be too much discountenanced. There is, however, great

* Sermons, Vol. vii. p. 512.

spirit and energy, and some fine and inimitable addresses in his writings.

Locke himself is far from being a scriptural writer. It is a strong statement which Mr. Scott makes ; he says, ' In no book which the author has read, does the pride of human reason, opposing the express testimonies of God, and striving to wrest them from their obvious meaning, appear so prominent as in most parts of Mr. Locke's Exposition of St. Paul's Epistles.' He had a clear and strong mind, with great powers of reasoning. He concurred with the Arminians, and was intimate with their leaders in Holland. His works have been much canvassed, and Lee, Brown, Edwards, and Stillingfleet, and the Author of ' Mr. Locke's Religion ' have sufficiently proved that he overvalued the powers of the human understanding, and disliked and disbelieved some of the vital doctrines of Christianity. Whatever desire of peace and union among Christians may have actuated him, we cannot but consider that his influence has been decidedly prejudicial to the pure gospel of Christ. While we acquit him of open scepticism and infidelity, we cannot acquit him of a tendency to Socinian principles. His works must therefore be read with caution. Locke admits that Jesus Christ gives his Holy Spirit to help us : but there may be the admission of a correct notion, without its becoming a living principle.

Various controversies arose at this period, which indicate the character of its divinity. One of the most important, the bad influence of which has reached the present day, and has been revived by Tractarians, was upon the doctrine of Justification. Mr. Nelson gives many particulars of this controversy in his life of Bishop Bull, taking the side of the Bishop.

Bishop Bull printed his Apostolical Harmony in 1669, with the professed intention of reconciling St. James and St. Paul ; designing to meet, what he supposed to be the erroneous views of other writers on justification. In his work there is much that is true ; he utterly renounces all

merit in works, and insists that no obedience can be rendered without the aid of the Spirit, and justly presses the necessity of obedience. But the whole system is calculated to undermine the simplicity and purity of the scriptural doctrine, and overturn statements in our Articles and Homilies, and elsewhere made by our Reformers. His system is, 'Faith, to which justification is attributed by St. Paul, is not to be understood as one single virtue, but denotes the whole condition of the gospel covenant, that is, comprehends in one word all the works of Christian piety.' It is surely a great inconsistency professedly to renounce all merit in works, and yet thus substantially to clothe them with merit sufficient to cover all sins and justify before God. Under the cover of justification by faith, it is in reality justification by works. The faith by which we are justified is not the principle that apprehends the Saviour and thus secures the exclusive glory to Him, but a principle which *includes* (not merely *produces*) works; which in truth is identical with works justifying us, or justification by works. By this mode of statement, justification by faith is indeed held in words, but the real doctrine is lost. In fact, similar perversions of the gospel had arisen in the days of the Reformers, and Melancthon ably met them: * 'We are accounted righteous, that is, are accepted of God and have peace of conscience,' he said, 'for Christ's sake, and not for that of our renovation to holiness. For this latter is not adequate to that end. We are justified by faith alone, not because of that grace's being the root of all virtues, but because it lays hold on Christ, for whose sake we are accepted, whatever be the amount of our renovation, which indeed must necessarily follow, but is not the thing that gives peace to the conscience. Love, therefore, though it is the fulfilling of the law, is not that which justifies, but faith only, not as constituting any perfection in

* See Scott's Continuation of Milner, Vol. ii. pp. 117—122. This statement by Melancthon is given in the History of the Church of Christ, Vol. vi. pp. 422—4, with a corroboratory addition by Luther. It is also to be found in several collections of Melancthon's Letters and in Luther's Colloquia Mensalia, pp. 212, 213.

us, but as apprehending or embracing the Saviour. We are righteous, or justified, not because of our fulfilling of the law, or our love, or our renovation (though these are the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us) but for the sake of Christ, whom we apprehend by faith alone.'

Bishop Bull's book led to many discussions, and was in part or wholly answered or noticed, either expressly, or by meeting the objections substantially, by Gataker, Trueman, Tully, Baxter, Tombes, Owen, and others.* Bishop Barlow having received a letter from a minister in his diocese (who wrote to him something on Bishop Bull's idea of justification by faith including works) replied in two argumentative letters written in 1678 (but not published till 1701,) in which he establishes the doctrines of the Reformation. The minister considered Dr. Hammond, Dr. Patrick, Dr. Tillotson, Dr. Stillingfleet, Dr. Pierce, Dr. Whitbert, Mr. Bull, Mr. Baxter, Mr. Rawlett, and Dr. Smallwood, as supporting his views of justification. Without admitting that they did, Bishop Barlow shows how contrary those views were to the whole spirit of the Reformers, and of later writers, as Jewell, Reynolds, Hooker, Whitaker, Davenant, Crakenthorpe, Field, John White, Downham, to the Liber Concordiæ signed by eight thousand ministers, and the Corpus Confessionum; and says, 'Sure I am, that all the learned Divines, and dutiful sons of the Church of England, who have written of our justification before God, before the late unhappy rebellion, at least all I have yet met with, do constantly prove and vindicate the imputation of our blessed Saviour's righteousness, against the contrary doctrine of Papists and Socinians.' p. 133.

Witsius in his *Animadversiones Irenicæ* ably meets Bishop Bull's statements. See chap. viii. and ix.

We have already noticed Baxter's *Aphorisms on Justification*, which Bishop Barlow regarded as the first deviation

* The controversy has been revived in the present day, and while we regret that Bishop Bull has still defenders, it is satisfactory to be able to refer the student to Bishop M'Ilvaine's *Treatise on Justification*.

from the received opinion on justification in the Reformed churches. Burgess, Crandon, Owen, Brown (in his *Life of Justification*) replied with various powers, and on different grounds to Baxter, who himself modified his statements in his *Confession of Faith*. In his last days he says, 'I formerly believed the formal nature of faith to lie in consent, but now I recant it. I believe it lies in trust, and this makes the right to lie in the object ; for it is, I depend on Christ as the matter or merit of my pardon, my life, my crown, and my glory.'

Dr. Sherlock in 1673 published a discourse on the knowledge of Jesus Christ, attacking Dr. Owen's work on *Communion with God*. He ridicules scriptural doctrines, and maintains a very lowered and unscriptural tone of religion. This led to Owen's Reply, Alsop's *Antisozzo*, Ferguson's *Interest of Reason*, and Polhill's Answer, with several others, containing, without defending every thing, valuable elucidations of the evangelical doctrines which Sherlock opposed.

From 1680 to 1690 controversies were maintained with great spirit on the subject of Popery ; which produced an extended defence of the Reformation, and tended to bring Protestants more to Reformation principles. Bishop Gibson's *Preservative* embodies several valuable Protestant pamphlets, and though wanting in the evangelical spirit of the Reformation, it furnishes, as far as strong argument and just reasoning go, an armoury of weapons against Popery.

The publication of Dr. Crisp's sermons, in 1691, led to something of a similar controversy among the Dissenters. Finding that the statements of Dr. Crisp tended to Antinomianism, Dr. Williams in the same year published his *GOSPEL TRUTH*, in which he took nearly the same standard as Baxter. It was approved by Dr. Bates, Mr. Howe, and Mr. Alsop. He was replied to by Chauncey in his, '*Neonomianism unmasked*,' (in which are some valuable remarks, though in a harsh spirit,) by Lobb, Edwards, and others. Dr. Stillingfleet was applied to as umpire. He

gave his sentiments in favour of Dr. Williams in the second part of his Discourse on the Doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, published in 1700, a work which contains many useful thoughts. It was answered by Chauncey. Trail wrote a Letter on the subject.* Witsius reviewed the controversy, and summed up his view of the Christian Truth in his *Animadversiones Irenicæ*, published in 1696. Beart's Vindication of the Eternal Law and Everlasting Gospel, in 1707, had reference to the same subject. Many expressions of Crisp are hard, rash, and unguarded, and he does not leave the holy impression of scripture, though doubtless he did not intend any thing contrary to holiness. Witsius' book is very satisfactory. Much may be learnt from each side in these discussions. But the general effect of the controversy was seriously prejudicial to the tone of divinity, and the various subtle distinctions concerning justification made by men of talent, learning, and personal holiness, had a most injurious tendency to cast that doctrine into the shade. It began to be shunned as a controversial, difficult, and dangerous topic, instead of being brought forward as a practical, experimental, life-giving truth ; the grand fundamental of genuine Christianity, and the all-quickening spring of holiness. It seems not to have been revived for a lengthened period.

The vital principle of the gospel being thus abandoned, nothing was left to be a sufficient guard against various kinds of error.

In 1697, a controversy arose respecting the powers and rights of the Convocation, in which Wake, Atterbury, Burnet, Hody, Kennet, Gibson, and Hooper, were concerned. Archbishop Wake's concluding work, the State of the Church, published in 1703, has been considered decisive with regard to the controversy. Such subjects are of little spiritual profit to Christians in general.

A similar contention arose a few years afterwards. In 1715 Bishop Hoadly, then Bishop of Bangor, published a Preservative against the principles and practices of the

* See his Works, Vol. i. p. 253, &c.

non-jurors, and shortly after preached a sermon on the words, *My kingdom is not of this world*, which produced what was called the Bangorian Controversy. He was considered as the patron and champion of misnamed liberal principles. His object was to show that the clergy had no authority in the government of the church, and the controversy afterwards changed from the rights of the clergy to that of the princes. Law's Reply in his three Letters to the Bishop is worth reading; but though it has been said that the controversy tended to confirm our civil and ecclesiastical liberties, it is one in the study of which precious time may be lost, and by which men's minds were diverted from vital principles. The violence of the disputes that arose on these occasions, led to the setting aside of the Convocation, which has not since been suffered to transact business. Was there not a want of evangelical principles both in high and low Church; and was not Christ, the only point of union for all Christians, too much lost sight of? If so, no wonder that eager disputes and wide-wasting divisions prevailed.

But more serious discussions, affecting even the first truths of religion, succeeded. The Socinian heresy now began to spread and increase. This is attributed by some to the Act of Toleration: was it not rather owing to the want of evangelical principles in the ministry of the word? *

* Mr. Bowman gives the following view of the case—'At the beginning of the eighteenth century Arminianism was sensibly on the decline. It had introduced Socinianism soon after the Restoration, which within a few years prevailed over it; so that Socinians were more numerous than the Arminians. Socinianism ushered in Arianism. But the Socinians having received a check, being publicly stigmatized by the Toleration Act in 1689, were obliged to speak with some caution and reserve. This perhaps was serviceable to the Arian interest, for it soon became predominant, and was at the commencement of the present age the fashionable religion.'

'Subscription to the Articles was an impediment in the way of the Arians, till one of them declared, 'the Articles may lawfully and conscientiously be subscribed in any sense in which they themselves by their own interpretation can reconcile them to Scripture, without regard to the meaning and interpretation either of the persons who first compiled them, or who now impose them.'¹

Even the pacific Wake, in a letter to the superintendent of Zurich, in 1719,

¹ See Waterland's case of Arian Subscription, p. 8.

The opposition of Socinians was not met with the evangelical piety, and learning, and wisdom of former days. Dr. Sherlock published, in 1691, a *Vindication of the Trinity*, with objectionable sentiments; it was animadverted on with bitterness by Dr. South. This led to a defence, and a rejoinder, and a censure of Dr. Sherlock's views by the University of Oxford, which irritated the parties more till government interposed. Mr. Howe wrote a *Calm Inquiry*, in opposition to Dr. Sherlock's view.*

In 1695, William the Third addressed the Archbishops and Bishops on differences among the clergy, about the Trinity, which had then arisen, and which, it was stated, might be of dangerous consequence, if not timely prevented. It was directed, 'That no preacher whatsoever, in his sermon or lecture, do presume to deliver any other topic concerning the great and fundamental truths of our most holy religion, and particularly concerning the Trinity, than what are contained in the Holy Scriptures, and are agreeable to the three creeds and the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion.'† It was stated, in the Address of 1695, that books and pamphlets were written and published against the Trinity, and industriously spread through the kingdom, by persons not of the clergy.

In April, 1699, the Archbishop of Canterbury (Tenison) addressed the Bishops on the sensible growth of vice and profaneness in the nation; which, to the great affliction of all good men, appears not only in the corrupt practices of particular persons, but also in the endeavours that are used to subvert the general principles of our holy religion.

thus writes—'They to whom the preservation of the church is committed, and whose duty it is to watch against her enemies, and to reprove, restrain, and punish them, according to their demerits, even these endeavour to overthrow the authority of that church. These men are highly displeased with all confessions of faith, and with all subscriptions to Articles, and would have a liberty, or rather a licence granted for all men, not only to believe, but to speak, write and preach, what they think fit; though the grace of the Holy Spirit, the divinity of Christ, and all other fundamental Articles of our religion should thereby be overturned.'

* See his Works. Vol. iv. p. 299.

† A similar direction was issued by George I. in 1721, when Whiston published his *Arian Sentiments*. Tindal's Continuation, Vol. xv. p. 301, and Vol. xix. p. 423.

And this with a boldness and openness far beyond the example of past times.' The methods suggested as most likely to work a reformation are a pious example, prudence in their behaviour, a thorough acquaintance with the rational grounds of Christianity, meetings of the clergy to gain over influential persons, ecclesiastical censures, the punishment of the civil magistrate, information against ministers of irregular lives, and diligence in catechising children. Nothing is said about the real root of the decay,—a departure from the doctrines of the gospel ; and therefore the only effectual remedy is kept out of sight.

The Cambridge Tracts on Predestination, published at the University Press, in 1719 (in which was included a bitter work of Womock's,) mark the change that had taken place from the days of Whitgift, when Baro was condemned for the very opinions which were then sent from the University Press, as 'the productions of the champions of our communion.'

Men now ministered in the sanctuary of the church of England, and held even some of the highest dignities (such as Clarke, Hoadley, Clayton, &c.) whose writings tend to weaken those fundamental truths respecting the Trinity, in which all who hold the head, agree. When Dr. Waterland expressed his astonishment that Dr. Clarke could subscribe to Trinitarian articles, Dr. Clarke retorted his wonder how Dr. Waterland could do the same with his views against Calvinism.

The Arian controversy, in this country, arose from Mr. Whiston's publications, in 1710, and the following years ; and from Dr. Clarke's Scripture doctrine of the Trinity, in 1712. It led to some valuable vindications of the Trinity, by writers from Dr. Waterland down to Mr. Jones of Nayland, though it is to be regretted that it was defended critically rather than practically ; as a theory of immense moment, indeed, but little traced out in the experimental and holy use of it in the Christian life.*

* Thus the sacred writers ever mention it ; thus St. Paul states it : *The*

None of these controversies therefore, nor even the excellent societies formed about this time, under Bishop Beveridge and Dr. Horneck, called the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, however they might in some degree retard the decline of piety, effected any marked or extensive revival of religion.

In the writings of Johnson, Brett, Hicks, Archibald, Campbell, and similar writers, from 1700 to 1750, we see a tendency to bring in again some doctrines, if not papal, yet having a strong leaning to that system, under the idea of conformity to the primitive church. There is in such writers devotion, sincerity, and learning, the anxiety of a mind awakened to the value of the soul ; but you find not a display of the sufficiency and simplicity of the gospel remedy. It was the embryo of Tractarianism, but was then generally rejected.

In 1747 a controversy arose on the continuance of the miraculous powers in the Christian Church after the Apostolic age, occasioned by Dr. Middleton's works on that subject. It led to much discussion, in which W. Dodwell, Brooke, Jackson, Toll, Church, Sykes, Stebbing, Warburton, &c. took a part.

Seeing the inconsistency of subscribing to Articles which they professedly did not believe, an association was formed, in which clergymen were associated, called, 'The Feathers' Tavern Association,' for obtaining relief from subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles. To promote the objects designed by this Association, Archdeacon Blackburn published 'The Confessional,' in 1766. It occasioned a lengthened controversy, in which seventy or eighty pamphlets were published, and Paley took a part in favour of the relief. It proceeded to an application to Parliament in 1772, which was rejected by a majority of 217 against

grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Thus Jude puts it: Building up yourselves on your most holy FAITH, praying in the HOLY GHOST, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST unto eternal life. Thus St. Peter: Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

71. It was however there treated, not as a religious, but as a political question. Mr. Rotherham's answer to the Confessional is published in 'The Churchman Armed,' and Bishop Conybeare's able sermon in the *Enchiridion Theologicum*. The controversy marks the decline in the principles of the Reformation. It was not now a scruple about the ceremony, but a rejection of the doctrine. Some of those who defended the Articles thought they might be amended, but the time was not favourable.

Some farther remarks on writers, who lived at the latter part of this period, will be added, before we give testimonies to the general effects of this decline. There were some lovely characters of primitive piety, such as Bishop WILSON, who died in 1755; men who adorned the gospel of Christ in their lives, though their writings fail of exhibiting fully the essential doctrines of the gospel. The divinity current in their days accounts for this deficiency; and there is enough to show that they still did hold these doctrines. Oh! that all who prominently profess them, walked as worthy of the gospel, as did the holy, and devout, and practical Bishop Wilson!*

William Law, who died in 1761, was a powerful writer. With a strong and vigorous intellect, he irresistibly main-

* This godly Bishop's Prayer will be acceptable to the pious student.

BEFORE STUDY.

O God! the fountain of all wisdom! in a deep sense of my own ignorance, and of the great charge which lies upon me, I am constrained often to come before Thee, from whom I have learned whatever I know, to ask that help without which I shall disquiet myself in vain. Most humbly beseeching Thee to guide me with Thine eye, and enlighten my mind, that I may see myself, and teach others the wonders of Thy law; that I may learn from Thee what I ought to think and speak concerning Thee. Direct and bless all the labours of my mind; give me a discerning spirit, a sound judgment, and an honest and religious heart; and grant that in all my studies my first aim may be to set forth Thy glory, and to set forward the salvation of mankind; that I may give a comfortable account of my time at the great day, when all our labours shall be tried.

And if Thou art pleased that by my ministry sinners shall be converted, and Thy kingdom enlarged, give me the grace of humility, that I may never ascribe the success to myself, but to Thy Holy Spirit, which enables me to will and to do according to Thy good pleasure. Grant this, O Father of all light and truth! for the sake of Jesus Christ.¹

¹ See Stowell's *Life of Wilson*, 2nd edit. 1822, pp. 295, 296.

tains the claim of religion, and shows the inconsistencies of nominal Christians, and urgently exhorts all men to a holy and devout life. But with his views of the reasonableness and necessity of a holy life, and his want of perception of those all-refreshing and comforting views of the gospel, which distinguish the Apostolical writings and the writings of the Reformers, or at least keeping them, as he did, in the back ground, it is not surprising that he fell into the reveries of Behmen, and ended in mysticism. No strength of mind, no justness of conception as to the importance of practical holiness, can supply the lack of the grace of the gospel. He who knows us best, and how best to recover us to Himself, has provided for us a High Priest, *touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, and never can we be brought nigh to God but by Him *who is the way, the truth, and the life*.

Bishop Warburton was another prelate of these times, of remarkable powers of mind and extensive learning. His Julian is a valuable work ; and his Alliance of the Church and State, and his Divine Legation (however we may differ from some of his main principles), cannot be read without being sensible of the vigour of his intellect, or without enlarging the mind.* It is said that Bishop Bull was his master, and Jeremy Taylor his favourite divine. Yet that it is possible to have all the powers of Warburton, and be greatly in the dark on the truths of the gospel, is made sufficiently evident, by his Treatise on the Doctrine of Grace.† He considered the teaching office of the Holy Ghost to be completed in the scriptures ; and that his sanctifying and comforting offices are chiefly confined to charity.‡

* There is a review of it in Graves' Lectures on the Pentateuch, Vol. ii. p. 142—154. See also Dr. Johnson's discriminating character of Warburton, in his Life of Pope.

† See, for answers to this, among others, Payne's letter to the Bishop of Gloucester ; and the Scripture Doctrine of saving grace, by the Rev. John Andrews, 12mo. 1769.

‡ He cannot have much understood the reproach of the cross, ever attendant on vital godliness, who, in assigning a reason for an abatement of the influences of the supporting spirit of grace, could say: ' Now the profession of the Christian faith is attended, with ease and honour, and the conviction, which

The writers of this class still hold some main doctrines of the gospel. Even Dr. Clarke maintains the atonement, and admits the gift of the Spirit as needful for all Christians, in every age, to produce moral dispositions and habits of mind; but in the striking description of Cecil, 'Clarke has above all other men the faculty of lowering the life and spiritual sense of scripture to such perfection, as to leave it like dry bones, divested of every particle of marrow or oil.

Men in leading situations had manifestly fallen back from sound doctrine. The sentiments of Archbishop Drummond, in 1760, mark the decline of vital religion. He exhorts the friends to whom he wrote to keep this fundamental principle always in mind, 'That the gracious designs of God towards mankind are conditional, never superseding, but always exciting and co-operating with the endeavours of men, as free, rational, and accountable agents.' Admitting that there is a sense in which this is true, yet the additional observations upon it throw a slight on the leading doctrines of the gospel. He says, 'If this be true (as I believe it to be, if I mistake not both the nature of God and man), and if this were always kept in view, we should hear little of many intricate and senseless questions about the influences of the Spirit, the power of grace, predestination, imputed righteousness, justification without works, and other opinions, which have from the beginning perplexed and perverted, debased, defiled, and wounded Christianity, which is in itself the most rational, pure, and plain system of faith and practice, levelled to the capacities and hopes of all men.' Would our Reformers have spoken in this way? Are not St. Paul's epistles full

the weight of human testimony and the conclusions of human reason afford us, of its truth, are abundantly sufficient to support us in our religious perseverance.'¹ Dr. Bentley said of the first volume of Warburton's *Legation*: 'This man has a monstrous appetite, with a very bad digestion.' Of his writings, Mr. Jones thought, 'Neither religion nor learning will ever derive much benefit, nor the Christian world any considerable edification from them.'

¹ Doctrine of Grace, p. 114.

of these subjects ? Though metaphysicians may have involved them with intricate questions, yet scriptural subjects should not be thus disparaged ; Church of England doctrine should not be so stated, by one of the Archbishops of our Church, as to be confounded with opinions which have debased, defiled, and wounded Christianity.

It was an indication of the low state to which divinity had sunk, that a Bishop of our Church, useful by his replies to Paine and Gibbon, should publish such a collection as Bishop Watson did in 1785, of *Theological Tracts* for the instruction of younger students in divinity. His list of books recommended to the clergy manifests this inferior state of religion. There is valuable learning enough indeed, but little of that evangelical, experimental, and spiritual class of books, which faithful ministers find so eminently useful, and much of that which is merely critical. Works tending to, if not directly Socinian, are praised ; while works of high value, such as Calvin's *Commentaries*, are unnoticed. Among his *Tracts* are Taylor's *System of Divinity*, Clarke on *Natural Religion*, and Taylor's *Key to the Romans*.*

Real religion was sinking fast through the country ; Mr. Knox, in his *Christian Philosophy*, has brought together a good deal of information on the great deficiency of Christian doctrines, and the evil consequences of it, and presses powerfully the importance of seeking divine teach-

* The *Enchiridion Theologicum* of Bishop Randolph, published in 1792, was of a much superior character, and brought forward many valuable works of the Reformers.

It shows the character of the divinity of that day, that a Regius Professor of divinity in the University, and a Bishop of our church should give such a statement respecting the fundamentals of religion as any Socinian could join in ;¹ and then say, 'Some one would think that I here speak too freely, and accuse me probably as an encourager of sceptical and latitudinarian principles. What ! shall the church of Christ never be freed from the narrow-minded contentions of bigots ; from the insults of men who know not what spirit they are of, when they would stint the Omnipotent in the exercise of his mercy, and bar the doors of heaven against every sect but their own ?' It is very easy to throw off a supposed accusation, by such a retort ; but this furnishes no answer to those who firmly, yet with Christian love, maintain principles which they believe God has clearly revealed as essential to salvation.

¹ See Vol. i. *Theo. Tracts*, Preface, p. xvi.

ing. He observes, that he who receives divine teaching 'will find that some of the most learned men, the most voluminous writers on theological subjects, were TOTALLY IGNORANT OF CHRISTIANITY. He will find that they were ingenious heathen philosophers assuming the name of Christians, and forcibly paganizing Christianity for the sake of pleasing the world, of extending their fame, and enjoying secular honours, and lucrative pre-eminence.' *

This departure from the principles of Christianity was very injurious to real learning. We find not the extent of research, the depth of thought, and the accumulated knowledge of former ages in the writers of this period. Archbishop Secker, in his Synodal Oration in 1761, observes, that 'the present age is not sufficiently given to reading books, especially the more ancient, and those of more profound argument, nor to deep thought or laborious writing.'

This departure was, as might be expected, accompanied with a loss of the holy influence of real Christianity.

This decay in piety has been testified by many of acknowledged excellence. Bishop Berkeley says, in a sermon preached in 1731, 'From the time that divinity was considered as a science, and human reason enthroned in the sanctuary of God, the hearts of its professors seem to have been less under the influence of grace.' †

Bishop Butler, in the Advertisement to his Analogy, published in 1736, says,—'It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much an object of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it, as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world.' ‡

* Though it will be obvious that the Author does not concur in all Mr. Knox's sentiments, he doubts not that his work of Christian Philosophy has rendered valuable service to divinity, and the honesty, and openness, and extent of research evinced by this Author, call for just commendation.

† See his Works, Vol. iii. p. 254.

‡ The Rev. D. Wilson, (now Bishop of Calcutta,) has published an Intro-

Archbishop Secker,* in his Sermons, (Vol. i. p. 59.) says, perhaps about 1758, 'It is a reproach I believe peculiar to the Christians of this age and nation, that many of them seem ashamed of their Christianity, and excuse their piety as others do their vices.' This was not more injurious to piety than it was to the established church. In one of his charges, Archbishop Secker says, 'We have in fact lost many of our people to sectaries by not preaching in a manner sufficiently evangelical.' See his 3rd Charge, p. 267.†

duction to Butler's Analogy, which proves that this able writer who thus describes the growth of infidelity, was deficient in clearly inculcating the doctrines of the gospel, and shows in a particular instance, very much the nature of that general decline which we are now considering. Mr. Wilson says, 'Those who preach and write in the temper, and on the scheme which we are opposing, do not use naturally and habitually the language of St. Paul and the other Apostles. This language does not fall in with their system, does not express what they mean: and therefore except when compelled by circumstances, their theological scheme avoids the scriptural phraseology, and is formed in a different school.' He mentions the terms 'virtue, vice, honest men, satisfaction of virtue, viciousness of the world,' being used instead of 'the scriptural terms, holiness, sin, renewed man, peace of conscience, corruption, and wickedness of the world.' Butler's particular object led him indeed to a more guarded phraseology.

* The very excellence of such prelates as Archbishop Secker makes it the more necessary to point out the defects of their writings. There appears to the author an obscurity in his mode of stating the doctrines of the gospel. In his sermon on Confirmation, after mentioning our fall, not with the strength of our Articles and Homilies, and the faint hopes that reason might give, the Archbishop proceeds, 'Most happily the Revelation of His holy word has cleared up all those doubts of unassisted reason, and offered to the worst of sinners, on the occasion of faith in Christ, and productive of good works, (for all which he is ready to enable us,) a covenant of pardon for sins past, assistance against sin for the future, and eternal life in return for a sincere though imperfect and totally undeserving obedience.'

Now admitting that the expressions, 'for all which he is ready to enable us,' and 'totally undeserving,' include divine grace, and exclude human merit; yet another expression, 'in return for,' throws an unscriptural aspect on the passage; and the whole statement is far below that clear, explicit, full declaration of divine grace on the same subject, which we have in Ephes. ii. 1—10, which carefully gives all the glory of our salvation to God, and yet effectually secures good works as the fruits of his grace.

† Archbishop Secker, in his first charge, in 1738, after allowing the proneness of men to complain of their times, says, 'In this we cannot be mistaken, that an open and professed disregard to religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age, that this evil is grown to a great height in the metropolis of the nation, is daily spreading through every part of it, and, bad in itself as any can be, must of necessity bring in, anon, others after it. Indeed it has already brought in such dissoluteness and contempt of principle in the higher part of the world, and such profligate intemperance and fearlessness of committing crimes in the lower, as must, if this torrent of impiety stop not, become absolutely fatal. And God knows, far from stopping, it receives through the ill designs of some persons, and the inconsiderateness of others, a continual increase. Christianity is now ridiculed and railed at with very little reserve, and the teachers of it without any at all.'

Bishop Lavington may be introduced as another unexceptionable testimony on this subject. He says, (addressing the clergy, somewhere about 1750.) ‘My brethren, I beg you will rise up with me against moral preaching. WE HAVE LONG BEEN ATTEMPTING THE REFORMATION OF THE NATION BY DISCOURSES OF THIS KIND. WITH WHAT SUCCESS? WITH NONE AT ALL. ON THE CONTRARY WE HAVE DEXTROUSLY PREACHED THE PEOPLE INTO DOWNRIGHT INFIDELITY. We must change our voice. We must preach Christ and him crucified. Nothing but the gospel is, nothing besides will be found to be, the *power of God unto salvation*. Let me therefore again and again request,—may I not add, let me charge you,—to preach Jesus, and salvation through his name.’*

Bishop Horne says, in his *Apologies* published in 1756,† —‘It is the complaint of hundreds of serious Christians, that there is at present a lamentable falling off from the OLD way of preaching and expounding the word of God.’ In alluding to critical works, (which he perhaps too much undervalued,) he ‘thought it of disservice to turn the minds of men more to the letter of the Bible, when they were already too much turned away from the spirit of it. The best fruits of divine wisdom may be gathered from the word of God in any language, and in any edition. To what the Scripture itself calls the Spirit of the Scripture, the learned of late days were become much more inattentive than in past ages.’ He mentions Clarke, Hoadley, Hare, Middleton, Warburton, Sherlock, South, W. Law, Edmund Law, and many others, who fell totally into the other way of studying and reasoning. The general statements of Bishop Horne and his biographer, Jones, illustrate the remarks which we have been making.

Bishop Horne’s views of preaching, not always (alas! such is our common infirmity) fully illustrated by his own sermons, are instructive. ‘To preach practical sermons, as they are called, that is, sermons upon virtues and vices,

* Quoted by Knox.

† See *Life* by Jones, p. 88.

without inculcating those great scripture truths of redemption, grace, &c., which alone incite and enable us to forsake sin, and to follow after righteousness, what is it but to put together the wheels, and set the hands of a watch, forgetting the spring which is to make them all go ?'

Dean Milner remarks, in the life of his brother, published in 1802, 'Formerly this country abounded with divines who were strenuous and able advocates for the establishment, who were orthodox in their faith, and who also were diligent and zealous in the practical application of their principles. Of late years there have not been wanting orthodox members of the church who have also shown themselves powerful defenders of ecclesiastical institutions ; but the persons of this description have not usually been industrious, earnest, plain, and practical preachers of the essential articles of the Christian faith. They seem to have contented themselves with supporting the outworks of religion, and with occasional declarations of orthodoxy, and almost to have forgotten that whatever in its aim stops short of thoroughly awakening the consciences of men, of subduing their natural corruptions, and of producing *a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, is not the gospel of Christ, that *power of God unto salvation*, which St. Paul preached. He afterwards speaks of this as amounting on the part of many of the clergy to a DANGEROUS DEPARTURE from sound doctrine ; but states that it prevailed some thirty or forty years ago more than then. —(p. cv.)

Infidelity arose and flourished in the decline of gospel principles. The way in which infidels were met equally marks the decline. The best mode of opposing Hobbes and Shaftesbury, does not seem to have been adopted. They were answered mainly on the grounds of reason. Christ with all His blessings, as manifesting his divine glory, and alone meeting every varied want of fallen men, was little exhibited as the grand internal evidence of religion. The Bible was rather defended, than used and improved. This great deficiency is too much the character-

istic of the admirable defences of the outworks in the able works of Leland.

It will be evident from the various testimonies thus given, that there was a serious falling away from pure doctrine in the English Church. Whatever material, or incidental and lesser excellences we may admit, there is a lack of the main spring of holy conduct. Christ was not the sum and substance: the doctrines which God eminently blesses to the conversion of sinners: the great and peculiar features of Christianity, such as man's apostacy, ruin, and inability; redemption by the blood of Christ, and salvation by grace, through faith; free justification, adoption, sanctification by the Holy Spirit,—if not opposed, if implied, or if expressed, are still not prominently, urgently, and clearly exhibited, as in the scriptures. Religion was enforced by many of this class, rather on the ground of its reasonableness and excellence, than from its divine authority. Divines seemed to hope to prevail by argument, wisdom, and talent, rather than by simply exhibiting God's truths as His ordinance for our salvation, and His only remedy for our diseased and ruined souls. Their example had a farther bad effect, as it introduced very widely an unscriptural statement of divine truth. It was a statement little calculated to offend the natural man, and therefore gladly adopted by such as had not themselves experienced the grace of God, or aimed merely to discharge clerical duties respectably and creditably.

But still we would be far from denying the piety, or, to a certain extent, the usefulness of the writers to whom we have referred. We gather useful lessons from the experience of past ages, and without harshly condemning in the mass, or in particular, men who followed the system which we have reviewed; we may derive much instruction from having the opportunity of knowing the result of a system which does not make Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, the leading topic. It produced a general decay of vital religion, notwithstanding the piety, the talents, the wisdom, the

superior eloquence, and the liberal sentiments of its leading advocates.

How insufficient every human scheme is, (however commended by all that is amiable and learned, and however designed to guard against real abuses) how utterly ineffective every system, except the simple gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, dying for sinners, to maintain and carry forward the Church of God ! The merely rational system of religion, without the peculiarities of the Bible, is both inefficient and injurious. Talk they of policy ? the simplicity of scriptural truth is the best policy. See what it did in Luther. You may perhaps, by human wisdom, escape the reproach of the cross, gain the admiration of man, rise to the highest ranks of human honour and emolument, but you part with the truth, you lose your usefulness, you deteriorate the gospel, and you injure the cause of God. You may have the starlight of a cold frosty night, but you lose the cheering, and enlivening, and fructifying warmth, of the glorious sun. What if the outworks are defended, where is the advantage, if those within the citadel withhold from us the privileges and the blessings of the kingdom. May the witnesses for Christ never hand down to posterity a lifeless, inefficient, and human system, which thousands shall unprofitably follow, instead of the life-giving and divine gospel, the power of God unto salvation !

There was a similar decline in SCOTLAND. Witherspoon, in his *Ecclesiastical Characteristics*, with a fine vein of irony and delicate humour exposes this. His descriptions relate to the state of the Scotch Church in the middle of the eighteenth century, and from this account, it appears to have been as low as the English Church at that time. He observes that it was a necessary part of the character of a moderate man, never, but with a sneer, to speak of the Confession of Faith (the standard of divinity in the Scotch Church) ; to confine his subjects to social duties, recommend them only from rational consideration, and draw his authorities chiefly from heathen writers. See his *Works*, Vol. viii. p. 28.

Amidst declines on the CONTINENT, the Pietists seem to have been much honoured in promoting vital religion. The main instruments of this, were Arndt (who died in 1685), Spener (who died in 1705), and Franck (who died in 1727). They were instruments of effecting a partial revival of religion which produced considerable effect, and was connected with a purer tone of divinity. Particulars of this will be found in Gillies' Historical Collections, and the *Pietas Hallensis* of Franck. See also Pusey's Historical Inquiry. Infidelity, however, under the mask of Christianity, greatly spread. It was exceedingly promoted by Semler, of whom Conybeare says, 'All or nearly all, the essential elements of his system, or rather of the objections which he made to the system usually acquiesced in by his countrymen, are drawn from Arian and Socinian writers of other nations; sometimes it should seem from sources yet more objectionable.' He mentions Professor Knapp and Storr, and the Moravian Brethren as opposing this infidel system.

In a review of the whole of this period, we cannot then say that the student will find no advantage from the various writers of whom we have been speaking. Admirable lessons, as we have seen, may be learnt from many of these authors, and especially those of the superior class; you have the reasonableness and beauty of Christian morality, though you are generally left without a due statement of that which alone to fallen sinners gives life and power to the precept; you have the defence of the external system, though you have not the light and glory which render its excellence self-evident. The spirit of writers has been more Catholic, and there has been less contention about minor points. If there be less originality and depth, there is ordinarily more correctness of expression. Sound criticism of the sacred text has, both on the continent and in this country, been much advanced, and the subject of the evidences of religion has, in consequence of the attacks of infidels, been placed in many new and striking lights.

May we not learn from such a review not to be carried away by mere authority of station. Sincere, affectionate, and ready respect is always due to those in authority ; but let us remember, that it does not necessarily follow, because men have been in high official situations in any church, that therefore their sentiments accord either with the scriptures, or the avowed doctrines of that church to which they belong. Many writers holding important offices in a church, have, as we have seen, departed very far from its principles, and there have been many outwardly of a different communion, who have held and defended all its doctrines.

There was all along (not ordinarily in prominent and leading situations, with the exception of Reynolds, Hopkins, and Beveridge, and some others) a class of writers and preachers who continued to uphold and diffuse evangelical principles, with the distinctness and clearness of better days. Some have already been noticed, and such writers as Polhill and Jenks in our own country, and Claude, Venema, Spanheim, Witsius, Vitringa, Turretin, and Franck in foreign countries still proclaimed the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel.

The Author has thus, with the utmost plainness and openness, stated his views on a subject, not less difficult than delicate.

It is delightful to think of the higher and richer song of praise, which we may believe many of those, on whose writings we have made these free remarks, are now singing :—*Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father ; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.*

SECTION VII.

MODERN WRITERS.

It will be generally allowed, that there has been an ex-

tended revival of scriptural divinity within the last century. Its commencement was, as usual in God's dispensations, with a few individuals.

Dr. Buchanan speaks thus on the subject : ' It was about the middle of the last century, that INFIDELITY, which had appeared long before, first began to show itself in strong and general operation. It was at a time when the light of Christianity was very feeble, and it was apprehended that this new adversary would totally extinguish it. But behold the providence of God ! at this very period there was a revival of religion in England, commencing in the bosom of our own church. Distinguished preachers arose in succession, men possessing the spirit and eloquence of the first Reformers ; and ' the doctrine of the blessed apostle and evangelist St. John,' was preached with great energy and effect ; multitudes of the people bearing witness, by their repentance and conversion, to its truth and heavenly power. And it was soon found to be the pure and operative faith of the primitive Church, and of the Reformation ; differing as much from mere profession as the substance from the shadow, and bearing the true character which cannot be feigned, namely, righteousness in life, and peace in death. At the very time when the spirit of infidelity was fostering its strength under the name of philosophy, and preparing for the awful revolutions which followed, the spiritual religion of Christ began to revive, and has since produced the most beneficial effects.'

He thus sums up those beneficial effects—(1) ' An increased knowledge of the Holy Scriptures ; producing (2) a cultivation of the principles of the gospel, and the practice of the virtues of subordination, loyalty, and contentment. (3) The almost universal instruction of the poor : so that it may be truly said, "the poor have the gospel preached unto them." (4) The more general worship of God in our land ; (5) the publication of the Bible in new languages, and (6) the promulgation of Christianity among all nations to Jews and Gentiles.'

It may be well more distinctly to mark the progress of

this revival, and let us take the account of an eminent instrument in carrying it forward—the Rev. Joseph Milner ; as it regards both his own case and the general state of the Church.

The Author has in his possession a letter from the late Joseph Milner, to Mr. Newton, dated in Sept. 1771, where, speaking of the great evil of mixing the gospel with philosophy, an evil which he had personally felt, he adds, ‘ Cambridge Metaphysics I am obliged to for much of that enmity and reasoning that have distressed me. In vain did I desire, when God shewed me the Gospel, in some measure to preserve a good understanding between the Scripture and King’s Origin of Evil, Locke, Clarke, and other metaphysicians, which I had read with greediness, digested with kind affection, and remembered, and still remember, with obstinate retention. The affair of free-will particularly has cost me many a pang. In short, by bitter experience, rather than reasoning, I have been convinced, that if man be saved, it must be by free grace, in the proper and full sense of the words. What signifies reasoning against facts? I found I could not believe, I could not perform duties, I was sure to break every resolution ; I could not change my heart, I was overborne irresistibly, and disappointed in all I attempted. I hope you go on with your people rejoicing in the Lord, and that more and more souls are brought over to know Jesus Christ. Here the gospel is in an infant state, yet has it pleased the Lord to bless my labours in a good degree, and direct them to His own glory : dark myself, I have been made the means of giving light to others ; and when I have been myself so little affected with what I have said, that I have been accusing myself of hypocrisy, how have I been astonished at the power with which it has been made to strike others.’

The Author has also in his possession a manuscript sermon of the late Mr. Milner, on Matt. ix. 36—38, (written probably about the same time) in which urging the duty of prayer for *more* faithful ministers, he says, “ Look now

at a parish, for instance, in which ungodliness, ignorance, and wickedness reign—where the sheep go astray continually, and the shepherd along with them, void himself of any Christian intelligence and sensibility, and unwilling that his people should have any. The sun shines not on more miserable and more pitiable objects. Pastor and people in this case have scarce an idea of any better situation in religion. In such places, vices of all sorts reign without controul, and the Christian religion appears a thing of no importance. You know it is no fancy picture I have been drawing; there are many such parishes in the land.’ He speaks of numbers of parishes, nay large tracts in the kingdom, still lying in darkness and wickedness. He then gives some account of the revival of religion in his day, as an additional motive for prayer—‘a great and effectual door is already opened in the Church of England, and the light breaks forth as the morning within her pale. Certainly every candid observer must see that there are at present many more useful, intelligent, and laborious ministers, than there were twenty or thirty years ago. Yet the opposition is great, and we are but in the infancy of things. It is observable, that the real good which has been done of late years in this kingdom, within the Church of England, has been effected chiefly through the means of the inferior clergy. The dignitaries of the Church have bestirred themselves very little in the work; rather opposition and contempt have come from that quarter.* The weight which laid on the inferior clergy, who have been desirous to spread divine truth and godliness according to the real principles of the Reformation, has been very great; much greater than those whose hearts are untouched with such things can well imagine. For they have on the one hand borne the burden and heat of the day, in encountering the ignorance and prejudice of the people at large whose souls they meant to benefit, and very

* The considerable change which has since taken place must cheer every reader. There are now living, dignitaries, whose names need not be mentioned, and others, like Bishop Heber and Bishop Ryder, gone to their heavenly rest, who have zealously laboured to advance the kingdom of Christ.

often the ill-will and disgust of the dignitaries of the church, and of many of their clerical brethren whom they would gladly have owned as zealous fellow-labourers, if truth would permit ; and on the other hand they have had to watch against the encroaching, bigotted, and sectarian spirit of vast numbers who desire to demolish the Church of England entirely, and raise themselves into power and consequence in its room.* My sole reason for mentioning these things at present, is to give Christian people a view of the state of things in religion, and to quicken and animate them to prayer. I do not mean that your prayers should be confined to our own Church. Supplicate the Father of mercies, that he would make his gospel to be known, felt, and loved among all who profess the name of Christ, that sinners may know what converting grace means, and that his kingdom may be set up in their hearts.' He proceeds to urge prayer for the spread of the gospel through the world.

These extracts will give some insight into the beginning of that gracious effusion of the Holy Spirit, which has rapidly distinguished the present time, and has produced an extensive revival of religion.

It arose in the middle of the eighteenth century, chiefly in the Established Church ; though Watts and Doddridge, among dissenters, prepared the way. Some of those with whom it commenced continued with the utmost consistency of conduct their labours in the Church, as Hervey, Walker, Toplady, Romaine, Adam, and Milner ; others, as Whitfield and Wesley, &c. were led, by the low state of religion in the country, to a more irregular system of action. All, notwithstanding minor differences, according to the gifts bestowed on them and the spheres in which they moved, laboured indefatigably to spread the main truths of the Bible, and of the Reformation. So greatly had the knowledge of divinity sunk in our country, that a

* Amidst all difficulties, a more kindly spirit is spreading among Christians of different denominations who are not of a political and party spirit, and who hold the Head. We owe much to the Bible Society on this account.

simple declaration of the doctrines of the Reformation was considered as an indication of a wish, and endeavour, to overturn a Church established by the Reformers ; and great was the obloquy and reproach which these holy men had to endure, even from those who, by their elevated situations, ought, like the first Reformers in Edward the 6th and Elizabeth's reigns, to have been their defenders and patrons.

Those who were chiefly honoured in accomplishing this work, were not men of extended learning or deep research ; or having the extraordinary powers of understanding, which distinguished Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. Speaking of the revival of the Reformation in our land at this day, as the last effusion of the Spirit of God, and pointing out the weakness and obscurity of the instruments by which it has been wrought, Milner says, ' I question whether human learning and sagacity were ever less employed in a religious work since the Apostle's days. It should be an instructive lesson to the learned and wise of this kingdom, that while they have scarcely contributed any thing, persons of lower rank and attainments have been instrumental in reclaiming thousands.' From this fact Milner then takes occasion to put a guard against enthusiasm on the one hand, and reasoning pride on the other.*

The doctrine of justification was now revived afresh from all the incumbrances with which the learning of Bishop Bull, the metaphysical mind of Baxter, and the unscriptural statements of Tillotson and his followers had oppressed it, and was proclaimed in its simplicity and purity as the divine and healing doctrine of the gospel. As usual, Satan, when he could not smother the flame, sought again to give it a wrong direction.† It is fully

* Tracts, p. 303, 304.

† Mr. Scott remarks—' The honoured instruments whom God employed to revive a more general knowledge of justification by faith, were naturally led to insist on the important subject with peculiar earnestness, and in the most energetic language. Some of them were so fully engaged in active services, as to have little leisure for study : and if they sometimes dropped an expression in the vehemence of an honest zeal, which was capable of misconstruction,

allowed that in this revival there were extravagances and errors, but a part of the reason of those is to be found not so much in their labours who revived religion, as in the negligence of those who had suffered the people to grow up in ignorance and indifference. A population thus neglected, when suddenly awakened to a sense of religion, easily fell into the snares of the enemy, who ever mingles tares with the wheat. Such works as Warburton's Doctrine of Grace, and Lavington's Enthusiasm, in fact thus condemn not only the enthusiasm of the people, but the negligence of their previous pastors. This revival was not confined to England. Brown, Erskine, and others in Scotland were greatly blessed of God. A similar revival took place in America : Dr. Green, the President of New Jersey College, observes, ' It is known to those who are acquainted with the state of religion in this country (America) about the middle of last century, that a great and general attention to religion was at that time excited in a large part of what were then called the British Provinces of North America. The celebrated George Whitfield was chiefly instrumental in producing the religious impressions which were then so extensively and generally felt.' *

The Author would merely notice one or two of the more

every candid man must acquit them of intending any thing unfavourable to practical godliness, which they eminently promoted and exemplified. But men arose afterwards who attempted to establish unscriptural *systems* on a few of their detached expressions, and on their fervent addresses to large and affected auditories ; or at least to support such systems by their authority ; and very respectable persons have been led to patronize and sanction their mistakes. Indeed this was no more than their reacting the same scenes which had been exhibited by the first Reformers from popery and some of their successors ; in whose writings the substance of almost all the controversies of these late years was fully discussed.

' While matters were taking this turn in England, some eminent divines in North America (Edwards, Bellamy, &c.) who had deeply studied these subjects, and had abundant opportunity of observing the practical effects of the different opinions, attempted with great ability to stem the torrent. But in doing this they seem to have gone rather too far, and to have thrown impediments in the sinner's path, when endeavouring with trembling steps to come unto the gracious Saviour.' ¹

* See Green's Discourses, delivered in the College of New Jersey, p. 255.

¹ See Scott's Works, Vol. i. p. 400.

devotional and practical, or decidedly evangelical authors, whose works may be useful to the student.

Bishop Horne died in 1792. His *Commentary* on the *Psalms* has long been a refreshing and delightful companion in the Christian's retirement. His sermons are polished, and have many beautiful and excellent thoughts, but they are wanting in the full declaration of justification by grace, and therefore meet not adequately the distresses of an awakened conscience.*

Jonathan Edwards died in 1758. He is a writer of great originality and piety, and possessed extraordinary mental powers. His *Treatises* on the Freedom of the Will, on the affections, on original sin, his *History of Redemption*, and *Life of Brainerd*, abundantly manifest this; and without concurring in every statement, and allowing that there is a dryness in the treatment of some of his subjects, and that metaphysical difficulties are not cleared up after all his arguments, yet there is a strength of mind, a soundness of principle, a holiness of purpose, an elevation of devotion, and an evangelical glow in his more spiritual writings, which will ever make him a valuable author. He, in fact, commenced a new and higher school in divinity, to which many subsequent writers, *Erskine*, *Fuller*, *Newton*, *Scott*, *Ryland*, the *Milners*, *Dwight*, and indeed the great body of evangelical authors who have since lived, have been indebted. His discourses on *Justification* are among the best on that all-important, but in its varied connexions and bearings, difficult doctrine.

Romaine, who died in 1795, was one of the earliest of those writers to whom we owe that revival of religion in our own country, of which we have been speaking. He had considerable learning as well as remarkably clear evangelical views; and few books have been more circu-

* *Bishop Horne's* Sermon on *Justification*, is harsh and unscriptural. It maintains in reality, justification by works, aiming to prove with *Bishop Bull*, that the only works excluded from justifying us are Heathen and Jewish works: works done without the grace of Christ. What is this but the system of *Bellarmino*? See the Author's discourse on *Justification*, in his *Occasional Works*.

lated than his Treatises on Faith, which are full of evangelical and devotional statements. He was strongly attached to the established church.

Milner of Hull, who died in 1797, will ever be valued by the Christian mind for his History of the Church of Christ, an inestimable treasure of evangelical truth and Christian experience, continuing the History of the Church of Christ, in the very spirit of the sacred writers, as far as human infirmity can tread in their steps. His sermons also are searching, and yet full of the gospel. His answer to Gibbon not only exposes the sophistry of that infidel historian, but gives the true character of the religion which he had attempted to undermine. *Milner's* works altogether are full of instruction to the student.

Jones of Nayland, who died in 1800, is in many respects a valuable writer, and his Treatise on the Trinity is one of the most satisfactory defences of that fundamental doctrine, on the simple testimony of the Holy Scriptures. His figurative Language of Scripture, Book of Nature, and other practical works are (notwithstanding the excess of figurative interpretation) interesting and useful ; but towards Dissenters and Calvinists he is painfully bitter. Following Charles Leslie's example, he takes partial and unfair views. Such views aggravate an evil which they design to remedy. The Author, however, is delighted to be able to add, on the testimony of a pious friend, (a relative of Mr. Jones,) that in his latter days his prejudices were much softened, and he courted the society of one of more decidedly evangelical sentiments, whom formerly he had despised, and viewed rather with hostility than friendship.

Newton died in 1807. His conversion was remarkable, and his works manifest that rich Christian experience which such a course as his, under the Divine Spirit, was adapted to give. His letters show great knowledge of the heart, and furnish excellent lessons of Christian wisdom.

Robinson died in 1813. He was a powerful preacher and an evangelical writer.

Fuller died in 1815. He was a writer among the Baptists, but of the same good school of divinity as Scott. With a lively imagination and all the powers of a masculine mind, he maintains the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, and insists on its practical holiness.

Scott died in 1821. He was a man of a strong, reflecting, and original mind, gradually compelled, under the teaching of the Divine Spirit, to bow to the force of scriptural truth, and then firmly and steadily following and serving that truth. He was thrown among Antinomians, and was fully alive to all the dangers of their pestilent error. His Commentary was a noble gift to the church of Christ, and furnishes us with the solid interpretation of a man of a powerful mind and great good sense, giving his own views wisely, freely, and plainly.

Robert Hall died in 1831 : one of the most able of modern writers, with a clear, argumentative, powerful, masculine mind, and a correct statement of evangelical truth. He was a Baptist, of similar views in general doctrine to Scott and Fuller.

Some who did not hold evangelical principles at first, embraced them afterwards. Thus Paley, in a Visitation Sermon, preached July 17, 1777, on the question, What the expressions in scripture, regenerate, born of the Spirit, new creatures, mean ?—answers, ‘ Nothing ! that is, nothing to us ! nothing to be found or sought for in the present circumstances of Christianity ! ’ It is very gratifying, however, to know that Paley’s views materially changed on this topic before he died ; and that, among the sermons directed to be printed after his death, are the following much more scriptural views on conversion. In a sermon Matt. ix. 13, he says : ‘ Of the persons in our congregations, to whom we not only may, but must preach the doctrine of conversion plainly and directly, are those who, with the name indeed of Christians, have hitherto passed their lives without any internal religion whatever ; who have not at all thought upon the subject, &c., &c., these persons are really in as unconverted a state as any Jew or

Gentile could be in our Saviour's time These must be converted before they can be saved ; the course of their thoughts must be changed, the very principles upon which they act must be changed There must be a revolution within. A change so entire, so deep, and so important as this, I do allow to be a conversion ; and no one who is in the situation above described, can be saved without undergoing it ; and he must necessarily both be sensible of it at the time, and remember it all his life afterward. It is too momentous an event ever to be forgotten. A man might as easily forget his escape from a shipwreck.'

The attacks of the enemies of revelation, as usual, called forth able replies. Infidel writers were met by Leland, Bishop Watson, Dr. Beattie, Paley, and Scott, with many others. The attacks of Dr. Priestley on the main doctrines of the Bible, from 1775 to 1804, led to many successful defences. Those of Bishop Horsley, of the English, and Dr. Jamieson, of the Scotch Church, remain as bulwarks of the faith.

The Refutation of Calvinism, by Bishop Tomline, led to Mr. Scott's Reply, and Dr. Williams' Defence.

Bishop *Horsley's* powers of mind were of a high order ; and his sermons and his other works will render assistance to the student chiefly in the way of criticism. He had the integrity and candour to speak decidedly against the ignorance of many who opposed what they called Calvinistic views.

Robert Hall justly commends the conduct of the pious clergy of this day, on points which once gave rise to so much controversy—the questions relating to predestination and free will, 'on which, equally remote from Pelagian heresy and Antinomian licentiousness, they freely tolerate and indulge a diversity of opinion, embracing Calvinists and Arminians without distinction : provided the Calvinism of the former be practical and moderate, and the Arminianism of the latter evangelical and devout. The greater part of them lean, we believe, to the doctrine of general redemption, and love to represent the gospel as bearing a

friendly aspect toward the eternal happiness of all to whom it is addressed ; but they are much less anxious to establish a polemical accuracy than to win souls to Christ.*

It has been noticed that this revival extended to America. The writings of Witherspoon, Bellamy, Hopkins, Davies, and others ; the republication of British works, and the labours of American preachers, seem to have been attended with revivals of religion, and the happiest success. America has continued to furnish valuable divines. Dwight's Theology, while we agree not in its statements on church government, and long to see in it more of that divine unction which draws the heart to the full enjoyment of communion with God in Christ, is still the work of a powerful and original mind, holding scriptural views of divine truth. Several valuable critical works have recently appeared in America.

The better state of things commenced in Germany with the Pietists, and fostered, as we have observed before, has been growing amid the opposition of infidelity and neologian principles (another name for infidelity)† and amid all the troubles of the continental wars ; still there seems reason to hope for brighter and better days in these first scenes of the Reformation.

Mr. Rose speaks of the high merits of Stow, whose school he says has been of the highest service in Germany.

* See his Reviews, p. 104.

† Since these remarks were written, Neology has so manifested itself in this country that the author thinks it desirable to insert a few symptoms of the existence of this destructive system, some of which were communicated by a friend.

1. A readiness to impugn the received text, or authorised version.—2. A total disregard of the order and method of the Scriptures.—3. Low views of their inspiration.—4. A total over-looking of God's providential care of the Bible.—5. A readiness to set aside such texts as maintain the great doctrines of the Bible.—6. An assumption of disagreement between different parts of the sacred Scriptures.—7. Insinuations, not sanctioned by the Bible, against the conduct of the faithful servants of God recorded in that book.—8. Accounting for miracles and prophecy on natural principles and without God's interference.—9. Speaking doubtfully of what it is admitted the Scriptures assert.—10. Supposition of enthusiasm, false reasoning and deceit, in inspired writers, and even in our Lord Himself!—All this too in men professing Christianity and ministering as its teachers! Here is Satan indeed transformed into an angel of light.

The names of Reinhand, Staudlin, Bengel, Knapp, Schott, Krummacher, Lucke, Tholuck, and Winer, are mentioned as having opposed the infidel system. Rose's Answer, p. 90.

The revival of religion in our country had to encounter much opposition. Many a charge, many a visitation sermon, many a pamphlet, many a periodical publication, and some more bulky works, professing complete refutation, have been issued against its instruments; but these attacks, calling forth able replies, have only strengthened and enlarged that which they were meant to overthrow.

Other authors, such as some that have been named, and Archbishop Secker, the Lowths, &c., might be added, who without rising to the evangelical simplicity of the Reformers, have, by general correctness of sentiment, and by real piety, or superior talent and learning, strengthened a cause which they did not avowedly join. This was the case also with some others who were even in part hostile to this revival.

The chain of evangelical writers has continued unbroken to our day. Serle, Cecil, the Venns, Buchanan, Richmond, Richardson, and others departed, have left writings that will long continue to edify the church. It may be noticed also, that many evangelical principles (such as the all-important one of justification by faith) are much more generally admitted than formerly by all classes.

The Author feels it an ungrateful task, from which he shrinks, to mention those of another class, who (however, in some respects, their writings may be original and valuable, and even eminently serviceable, as it regards the externals of religion) have been far from advancing the holy and evangelical principles on which our church and the church of Christ are founded; and have even maintained, in some things, views which we cannot but consider adverse to them. It was an indication of that departure from the spirit of the Reformation, which we have noticed in the previous section, that, in the modernized edition of the Homilies, published by Sir Adam Gordon, in 1795,

the doctrine of justification by faith was altered from the same doctrine, as maintained in the original Homilies, so as to include good works, as part of the ground of our dependance ; and yet this edition was recommended by one bishop, and has been quoted, in controversial writings, as an authentic testimony of the sentiments of our Reformers.

The Author cannot mention living writers ; but it would be easy to select, from the lists of books given in a subsequent chapter of this work, a delightful catalogue of those who have, in more extended publications in our own day, advanced and maintained evangelical and practical religion ; whilst others have been serviceable in various degrees to the church by critical and learned treatises, or have ably opposed the Roman Catholics.

The Wesleyans, as a body, have not been without their share of valuable writings, as many of the works of Wesley, Fletcher, Benson, Drew, Clarke, and others, sufficiently show. The Author has already stated his own views on points on which he differs from the excellent men to whom he here refers ; but he would be sorry not to state that there are many truly valuable works among this class of Christians, and much of real learning, elevated piety, fervent zeal, and deep spirituality of mind.

Modern dissenters have fully partaken of the improvements of the times, and many of their works furnish invaluable helps in theology. The doctrinal Articles of the Church of England are strenuously upheld by the great body of pious dissenters. Not to allude to living authors, Gill, Booth, Lavington, Bogue, Williams, Ryland, with many others that might be mentioned, have left writings which, making every allowance for diversity of sentiments on inferior points, will furnish much information and edification to the student.

Scotland has also furnished its help to sound divinity in this age. The writings of Professor Campbell, though not distinguished by a rich exhibition of the grace of the gospel, are manifestly the works of an upright, conscien-

tious mind : those of the Erskines, Jamieson, and Mac-laurin, are of a higher cast, and will amply repay perusal ; Brown of Haddington will ever be a favourite author, from his extensive scriptural knowledge.

Some have seriously feared that the revival of which we have spoken, and which has hitherto but partially prevailed in the British churches, has already begun to decline. It is true that the profession of evangelical principles has spread much more widely, and thence the waters may not be so deep. There is always through human corruption a tendency to deterioration. It is a day of concession, and there is danger of conceding vital points. Classes of men are not so distinct. Faithful Christians are not so separate and united. There is less of the reproach of the cross, and this may not spring so much from the greater diffusion of religion, as from the greater laxity of the religious.

These things show us at any rate the need of great watchfulness, and of close adherence to the word of God. Many also, have as yet felt little of the influence of this revival, except as it respects an increased attention to external duties, and to general learning. In these, and other things of a similar kind, where there has not been a direct, there has been a collateral influence, very much connected with the revived doctrines of the Reformation.

But we must not enlarge. On a review of the whole, we may look to the Reformers for the best mode of stating doctrine ; to the Puritans for answering the objections of enemies of the gospel, and dissecting the inward recesses of the heart, and distinguishing hypocrites ; to the subsequent school for a just mode of language and expression ; to recent writers for candour and freedom from the shackles of system ; and may we not trust, that divinity, in its highest sense, as that heavenly wisdom which declares to us the way of eternal life by Christ Jesus, is indeed reviving among us ?

The rise of the *Tractarian* School in 1833 is likely to produce vital and important changes. As it manifests the

spirit of Popery, it is more and more likely to attract all which has affinity with that apostacy, and to compel the faithful followers of Reformation Truth to a more distinct, open, and full confession of their principles, and so to lead to a more decided conflict of principles than has yet been witnessed.

It may assist us in forming a comparative judgment of the present state of divinity, to contrast some publications of a similar class which have been published in different periods of the church. There are three works, (the *Whole Duty of Man*, published about the middle of the 17th century ; the *New Whole Duty of Man*, published 50 or 60 years after : and *Venn's Complete Duty of Man*, published on the revival of religion) which illustrate the character of the divinity of their respective æras. The *Whole Duty of Man*, was a practical book, to counteract the Antinomians, and contains an impressive introduction on the care of the soul ; the devotional part is full and useful ; and it has a good statement of relative duties ; but it does not exhibit prominently the only principles and strength in which man can perform them. The *New Whole Duty*, attempting to remedy this, by bringing forward the faith as well as the duty of the Christian, has completely departed from the principles of the Reformation, and is a very dangerous and unsound book. In *Venn's Complete Duty of Man*, we return again to the principles of the Reformation. He exhibits clearly, justification by faith, and the vital doctrines of the gospel, but though doctrinally an improvement, it is yet defective, as a complete substitute, in the statement of practical duties.

The books and tracts of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge have, in some measure, as might have been expected, partaken of the character of the times in which they were written. Those who have had opportunity to know its operations will feel that the Society has done, and is doing, much to promote the purest divine truth. Bibles, Prayer Books, and Homilies, and many excellent religious works have been circulated by it to a

vast extent. There are also truly valuable works on its lists. But many of its warmest friends have deeply regretted, that some works that have been circulated by it, should have ever had this sanction given to them ; and that there should still be found among its publications, any which contain sentiments in any degree similar to those to which we have just adverted in the *New Whole Duty of Man*.*

The present members of the Society have inherited the Tracts of a century and a quarter, and with them the defects which would almost inevitably occur in so extended a period of years : measures have been in progress for preparing Tracts more plain, simple and interesting, and more sound in doctrine.

The circumstance of any of the Tracts of the Society being dull and uninteresting, is but a small evil compared with a more serious defect ; the withholding or scanty exhibition of the great doctrines of grace, free justification by Christ Jesus, the sweet spirit of adoption, the offices of the Saviour, and the work of his Spirit. His grace and glory were not the prominent and leading character of the Tracts, hence they could not extensively promote his kingdom. It is most desirable that the chief attention should be directed to this point.

The true guard against Antinomianism is not the multiplication of legal requirements ; nor the so cautiously stating the way of salvation, that a poor sinner can hardly find it for the peace and comfort of his afflicted conscience ;

* There are passages in its tracts which may indeed be justified by a favourable construction, but which are materially deficient in scriptural simplicity. Terms and expressions are used, which may easily mislead, and which give not the full light and glory of the scriptural doctrine. In so all-important a plan as the way of salvation, where one constant tendency of the natural heart invariably is to seek salvation by our own good works, we want that bold, clear, decisive, evangelical statement which distinguishes our Articles, our Homilies, the writings of our Reformers in general, and above all, the word of God. (See Rom. iii. 19—31. Gal. ii. 6. Eph. ii. 1—10.) Admitting that there is also a tendency in our corrupt heart to abuse the doctrines of our free salvation, a tendency described in the sacred record ; yet that doctrine must not therefore be indistinctly stated, for it alone meets the necessities of an awakened mind and a distressed conscience ; and it alone is blessed by the Holy Spirit, as the mighty lever to move the world, *the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth.*

but the full declaration of Christ Jesus in all his offices, as a complete Saviour, delivering us both from the guilt and the power of sin, the setting forth the promises of the gospel as effectual motives to holiness, with the development of all holy duties, as invariably flowing from the Saviour's grace, and the true evidence of that grace in our conformity to Him, who loved us so as even to die for us, and who Himself makes us *meet for the inheritance of the saints in light*.

There is one work published by this Society, which, being of the same nature as works published by the Reformers, gives us an opportunity of comparing the sentiments of different æras with much facility. We allude to the Bibles with notes, published in King Edward's and Queen Elizabeth's reigns, and the Bible published by the Society.

Cranmer's Bible was published in 1539, and re-published with notes in 1549, with a table of the principal matters. This table contains statements which would now be called Calvinistic.

The Geneva Bible was widely circulated at the Reformation. This Bible was translated and printed with notes by the English Refugees at Geneva. Lewis says, 'Of this translation, which was mostly had and used in private families, there were above thirty editions printed, mostly by the Queen's and King's printers from 1560 to 1616.' Though it is called the Geneva Bible, it is different from that published by the pastors and professors at Geneva. It had the sanction of Archbishops Parker and Grindal, the latter of whom was then Bishop of London. They said to secretary Cecil in 1565, 'they thought so well of the first impression, and the review of those who had since travailed therein, that they wished it would please him to be a means that twelve years' longer term might be, by special privilege, granted,' for its publication, and assured him 'they would take such order with the party in writing, that no impression should pass but by their direction, consent, and advice.' This Bible is not uncom-

mon, especially since it has been reprinted. Let any read the notes, and judge of the sentiments of those in authority by them. The character of these notes is sufficiently known.

The Bishop's Bible is more scarce, but being more expressly published by the Bishops, and sanctioned by the government, its authority is more decisive as to the sentiments of the Church of England at that time. It was first published in 1568. The notes, though short, are full of evangelical truth and unction.

The general strain of sentiment, in Doyley and Mant's Bible, is obviously different from that in the Bishop's Bible. It may be useful, though the Author feels the delicacy of the ground on which he treads, to enter into farther particulars.

The system of selection from approved writers, was in itself valuable ; but, without much care, it leads, as it has led here, to a considerable difference in the tone of divinity, according to the different writers from whom the selections are taken. It was to be expected that the notes taken from Andrews, Beveridge, Caryl, Daneus, Hall, Hooker, Latimer, Mede, &c. should be superior in tone of doctrine to those from Bull, Clarke, Grabe, Hammond, Jortin, Locke, Macknight, Pyle, Tillotson, Tomline, Whitby, Womock, &c.*

In a commentary designed for families and general use, in the middle and lower classes, practical reflections and personal application of the truth are especially valuable. If these had abounded, and if devotional as well as evangelical statement had come in every chapter, they would have rendered it far more edifying.

The work contains much useful information, gathered from quarters where readers in general would not look for

* The Necessary Doctrine, &c. should not have been quoted, and ought not to be designated as Cranmer's work. Bishop Lloyd remarks that it is probable that Gardiner (the great enemy of Cranmer) had more influence in the preparation of this work than in either the Articles or Institution previously published. Cranmer's genuine sentiments upon the Erudition are still preserved in remarks which he made upon it, and which were published in the Fathers of the Church.

it, and often throws considerable light on difficulties. As a work containing the result of extensive critical labours and learning, clearly expressed, and generally with much judgment, it is truly valuable.

But the Author cannot faithfully express his views without adding, that while there are some distinct statements of evangelical doctrine, there are others which he conceives to be seriously objectionable. He would refer to the extracts from Jortin, on Jer. xvii. 9, and from Dr. Hammond, Dean Tucker, and Bishop Tomline, on Eph. ii. 8, as specimens of this nature.

It is greatly to be desired that every part of a work so sanctioned, and so widely circulated, should contain, unobscured by doubtful quotations, an evangelical, sound, practical, and holy exposition of the full meaning of the sacred word, throughout furnishing clear exhibitions of salvation by Christ, and abundantly dispensing the streams of redeeming grace, and the operations of the Divine Spirit, with which the sacred fountain of holy writ abounds.

A more practical and evangelical exposition is much to be desired, and has been several times attempted (but without success) by the Society.

May the Great Head of the Church so pour out his Spirit upon us, as more and more to raise all our hearts to that rich and consoling view of His truth which made our Reformers willing to die in the flames for His name's sake ; and may the successors of Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and Bradford, ever hold the doctrine for the maintenance of which they suffered, even the pure doctrine of Jesus Christ !

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